M A E S T R O A N D M A R G A R I T A

O F H O L L Y W O O D

English translation of the German original:

Maestro und Margarita von Hollywood

(based on Mikhail A. Bulgakov's novel *The Master and Margarita*)

Screenplay for a TV miniseries consisting of a Pilot and 12 episodes

From Russia With Love And Death (Pilot)

INT. - A SMALL MOVIE THEATER

On a movie screen, against a black background, a long list of closing credits rolls, accompanied by the aria Glücklich ist, wer vergisst (Lucky Is He Who Forgets) *from Johann Strauss' operetta* Die Fledermaus (The Bat). *The piece of music is arranged to sound "Indian," in the style of a romantic Bollywood musical film.*

BERLIOZ *and* NANCY *sit next to each other in the first row. Otherwise, the first row is empty. The rows behind them, rising in tiers, are in semi-darkness; it is just possible to see that they are almost completely occupied.*

The caption 2017 appears at the bottom of the screen.

BERLIOZ
I'll kill myself!
NANCY
It's not that bad... The choreography is brilliant... the costumes... the snow-covered Tyrolean mountains... the ski stunts... one catchy tune after another... a film with two Bollywood superstars can't be a flop, believe me!
A semi-transparent, long, thin man in white baggy pants and a blue and white striped rowing shirt, with a pointed hat sitting askew and glasses with one lens missing and the other one cracked, dances around in front of Berlioz. It is the demon BASSOON*; he is only visible to Berlioz.*

BASSOON
in an unpleasantly rasping voice But we're a perfectionist! Perfectionist and coward. A fatal mélange!
He darts forward and gives Berlioz a jovial pat on the chest. Then he slowly dissolves into thin air

BERLIOZ

feels his heart, breathes in deeply, but does not breathe out What … who … did you see this guy?

NANCY
I did! He's got beautiful eyes! Such an intense kind of blue. Only their zombie-look is a bit disturbing … but, what the hell! He's got a nice tenor!
BERLIOZ
breathes out noisily and still clasps his chest with his hand Exactly … for an undead he's quite good-looking … I'm going to kill him!
NANCY
Why don't you call him Frankenstein instead of Eisenstein?
BERLIOZ
breathing heavily I'll delete him from my film ...
NANCY
You want to delete Eisenstein from *The Bat*?!? But that's the operetta's main character! You are the Eisenstein killer … first Sergey Eisenstein, the Soviet film director, now Gabriel Eisenstein, the Tyrolean skiing instructor… It's a pity you considered yourself a reborn Vincente Minnelli!

BERLIOZ
whispers sadly Rather Michael Powell and Emeric Pressburger …
NANCY
You'll have to accept that the main actor of your so-called musical exudes the charm of a worn-out cyborg!
BERLIOZ
gasping, sweat covering his brow I'll show him only from behind … and skiing, of course … ski-jumping as well! In extreme slow motion he glides down the ski jump and sings off ... That looks well … I'll extend the scene where he's buried under the avalanche ...
NANCY
cuts him short You'll have to remove the rescue scene … much too dangerous … Grubsy and the Saint Bernard together on screen … much to risky ...the similarity of their acting is too striking ...
BERLIOZ
… And your role … Oligarch Orlofsky … will be the main part!
NANCY
sneeringly Okay?! How come?
BERLIOZ
hoarse, breathless, disjointed, with a voice growing ever quieter So Eisenstein zips over the frozen glacier lake on short skis and rescues Rosalind's dwarf poodle from the ice hole, isn't he? Then he is in turn saved by oligarch Orlofsky, who abseils down from a helicopter, dives into the icy water and grabs him and the puppy before both disappear under the ice. So far so bad... because I want him to disappear, this blonde orangutan who ruins my film! So I cut the scene... no one notices anything, because you look stunningly sexy in that tight turquoise diving suit with the golden Kremlin dome helmet... a mermaid can't compete!
The pathetic attempt to laugh at his own joke fails miserably, he struggles for breath
You give Eisenstein a few elegant pushes underwater so that he doesn't come up and sinks into the icy depths... in the dark... wet... grave... forever disappearing... from then on... oligarch Orlofsky steps in his place... disguised as Gabriel Eisenstein!
NANCY
with a joyless laugh
Haha... that was good... disguised... hahahaha... elegant pushes... dream on, Mike!
The semi-transparent Bassoon becomes visible for a short moment and slowly fades again.
BERLIOZ
It seems I'm having an hallucination … it's all the fault of this braindead Bretchtengrumper …
NANCY
Perchtengruber! Star tenor Peter Perchtengruber … the best Siegfried ever! You've run out of money … and I won't be at your disposal anymore!
BERLIOZ
Of course! These days you've made the scene as … *sarcastically stressing her first name* Natasha Procopios, a part-time opera diva …
The closing credits are finished, the screen is empty. The audience breaks into loud applause.
NANCY
Stand up and bow! They liked it, see? Anyway they're glad it's over. What's the matter with you?
BERLIOZ
I can't! I feel sick … this clown …
The spectators are leaving the theater through two exits at the back.

A FRECKLED STRAWBERRY BLONDE WOMAN *dressed in a sort of Indian sari comes forward and bends down to Berlioz*
Congrats! We'll all go out to the patio, it's such a mild evening. ... Are you coming? Nancy! Guys,

gals, ... LGBTQI+… absolutely all genders will fall in love with Oligarch Orlofsky... But I'm sure this isn't the first time you hear that?
NANCY
stands up No ... but ... that's very kind of you... Well, trousers parts are always rewarding...

A MAN IN A CORRECT DARK SUIT *calls from behind, while disappearing through the door* Mike! We simply gotta discuss this tonight. You know, we're flying back tomorrow morning!
BERLIOZ
gasping more loudly again, speaks hoarsely and in a clipped manner As far as the money is concerned ..I'll sort that out ... The set of the ball scene is still standing ...Nancy, I'm warning you ... if you refuse, I'll crucify the two of you ... you and Maggie ...
Nancy winces when she hears the name Maggie.
BERLIOZ
I know you're somehow involved in that disappearance of the so-called Maestro... something is sure eating you ... like the earth had swallowed up our so-called Maestro ... listen ... either you play a few more scenes for me, or else I'll hire a private detective and find out something really unpleasant! ... Unpleasant for you, unpleasant for Maggie, tragic for both of you!
Nancy is petrified by Berlioz's words.
NANCY
Go to hell!
BERLIOZ
I guess I just had a heart attack. ...This clown did ... I believe in miracles, Nancy, otherwise I wouldn't have become an independent producer ... I'll get that money. Somehow! A miracle will happen, very soon ... I can feel that! I can't breathe any more!
For the first time Nancy realizes that Berlioz does look very sick. She looks at him attentively, then bends down to him.
NANCY
You're pale as death … and you're all covered in sweat! I thought you were acting to arouse pity ... like when we were still married!
Nancy takes her handbag, which is lying on her seat, and searches about in it.
NANCY
I'll call an emergency doc. Try to breathe regularly ...where the devil's my cell?

Out of twilight VOLAND *appears and occupies her seat. He looks well-groomed and distinguished, dark suit, dark shirt, wine-red bow-tie. He is leaning on a walking stick whose knob is adorned by a poodle's head.*

NANCY
This is a private event. Hotel guests are not allowed. What are you doing here?
VOLAND
I have come to terminate suffering.
NANCY
sits down beside him Oh, you're a doctor? He's in a very bad way, he can't breathe ...
VOLAND
speaks with a slight accent Doctor? Me? ... Anyway, he's better now! Aren't you, Mr. Berlioz?
BERLIOZ
breathes normally again, sits upright, speaks in a powerful voice I've never been better! A miracle! How come you know my name, Mr ... Mr ...?

Voland hands one business card each to the left and to the right.

BERLIOZ
reads Professor Voland, film historian. ... Oh, you’re a film historian, professor?
NANCY
She gives back Voland’s business card without looking at it, stands up and bends down to Berlioz to help him rise from his seat Mike, you’re not well ... Please stand up!
BERLIOZ
Wait, wait! *takes a closer look at the business card* It reads .... funny print .... Moscow! What's a Russian film historian doing in Hollywood?
VOLAND
Probing, probing, nothing but probing! A delicate mission, that's for sure!
BERLIOZ
Why? Prob what?
VOLAND
speaks with an increasingly stronger Russian accent Confidentially speaking, my boss is a complete cinemaniac! If you ask me, he's over-ambitious and a snob! In a nutshell: a Don Quixote! In Hollywood of all places he wants to secure his dinero! *whispering mysteriously* For tomorrow there might already be revolutzia, maybe even confiscatzia, who knows?
NANCY
pulling Berlioz's sleeve Mike! This guy is dead drunk! Don't you see?
BERLIOZ
Just a moment! This is highly interesting! Not the revolution stuff, but the rest! Who is your boss, dear professor?
VOLAND
Oh, this is top secret! I am not entitled to name him ... As a matter of fact, nobody is permitted to utter his name! Hushhh!

Berlioz and Nancy are looking at each other. Nancy is rolling her eyes. Voland struggles to his feet, leaning on his stick.

BERLIOZ
pulls Nancy down to him, whispering in her ear He's heaven-sent! He's come to our rescue, I can feel that!

INT. - SPACIOUS PARTY ROOM - EVENING

In the room there are high round tables, covered with white table-cloths, like for a big buffet party. However, the whole room is empty, except for a table in the middle, around which Voland, Berlioz, and Nancy are standing. On the table there is a bucket with a bottle in it, as well as three champagne flutes. In the background, all over the wall, one can see half-open sliding glass doors. A hubbub of voices and a tinkling of glasses can be heard from the patio.

BERLIOZ
I shouldn't worry about a thing, you're telling me? A polite phrase to comfort me in my misery .... Professor Voland, you're a very kind person ...
VOLAND
A phrase? Comfort you? Nothing could be further from the truth! *laughs*

At the other end of the room RYUKHIN, *a very old snowy white-haired man in a wheelchair, is*

looking through opera glasses in the direction of Voland. The left half of Voland's laughing face appears in the lens, he has three gold crowns in his crooked mouth.

Me, a kind person? *laughs again*

At the other end of the room - this time on the right side - Ryukhin looks through his opera glasses in the direction of Voland. The right half of Voland's laughing face appears in the lens, showing four platinum crowns in his mouth. Ryukhin drops his opera glasses. His face expresses sheer horror. He moves the back of his hand to his mouth, as if to stifle a scream. Then, at first unnoticed, he begins to circle the table around which Voland, Berlioz, and Nancy are standing.

BERLIOZ
Well, how am I supposed to understand it then? Oh no! Not now! Ryukhin, the old asshole! Did you invite him?
NANCY
Yes, why not? But he should have been back in the retirement home by now... where is he? I can't see him.
BERLIOZ
He's circling us! He's doing a slalom between the tables in his fucking wheelchair! I guess he's standing right behind us! Nancy, please don't turn around!

Nancy turns around. She sees Ryukhin, his face paralyzed with horror, staring at Voland.

RYUKHIN
croaking loudly It's him! It's him! I recognize him!

Ryukhin looks through the opera glasses. For the fraction of a second the face of Voland as Satan appears in the lens: his mouth is crooked, his right eye socket empty and black, his left eye golden green and glassy, like a reptile's. One eye is situated higher than the other.

RYUKHIN
croaking Bezdomny was right! It's him! It's him!

Nancy turns around abruptly to Voland, who keeps looking at her with a faint smile, then back to Ryukhin, who is uttering inarticulate sounds.

NANCY
Val, Val! What the hell's the matter?

She wants to join him, but Berlioz grabs her arm and doesn't let her go.

BERLIOZ
You'll stay here! I'll sort that out ... The old bum has staged the whole show!
NANCY
Mike! What makes you say such a thing! You can see he's almost scared to death!
BERLIOZ
He's an actor! Or rather: was an actor ... But he's been keeping on at Jess about a role for weeks ... I'm dumbfounded! He's 100 years old, looks like a mummy, and wants to act in another horror film! *to Voland* You know, professor, this is Hollywood, too!

Berlioz goes to Ryukhin and has harsh words with a young woman who is now standing by the old man. Consequently she pushes the wheelchair out of the room hurriedly.

BERLIOZ
goes back to the table Professor, I owe you an apology ... So you told me not to ...
VOLAND
interrupts him
You will die pretty soon, Berlioz ... That is why you needn't worry any more!
BERLIOZ
alarmed You are a doctor after all, aren't you? And what happened before, was a heart attack ...
VOLAND
stops him impatiently Zero heart attack ... You will be decapitated!

Nancy winces.

BERLIOZ
laughing Big deal! That's pretty reassuring! Now after that shock I gotta go ... to the boys' room, urgently! I'll be right back!

Leaves hastily.

VOLAND
looks at Nancy earnestly and sympathetically You are so docile, Nancy ... why? Because you are loyal to him although he does not deserve it at all ... It is so sad ... He already saw himself as a new Vincente Minnelli … even as a legitimate inheritor of Michael Powell and Emeric Pressburger ...
NANCY
interrupts him Don't Russian mommies teach their children that eavesdropping is ill-mannered? By the way, where's your Russian accent now?
VOLAND
No ... You put up with many a thing because he is blackmailing you! He’s blackmailing you with Maestro and Margarita!
NANCY
I do feel sorry for Mike, though! If you really were the agent of a multimillionaire, you wouldn't need to sit behind us and spy on us all the time! Maybe you're one of those jobless actors who keep on stalking Mike ... I gotta admit you're not that bad ... it seems you've been underrated so far!
VOLAND
Would you like to know what Mike is doing at the restroom?
NANCY
Is this small talk in the Russian way? Oh ... I forgot ... You're not Russian!
VOLAND
He is relieved! His smartphone just told him about me what he wanted to hear!

Nancy stares at him furiously.

In a low, tender voice Two years ago you still looked so lovely ... Nancy ... but then ... something happened ... your features have become much sharper ... since then ... the harsh feature around your mouth ... Nancy ... it is no coincidence that you were cast for a trouser role!

Nancy winces, she wants to say something, but then she changes her mind and presses her lips together.

I'm begging you ... don't open your eyes so wide and don't squeeze your lips together like this! Even now you look like Joan Crawford in her later films!
NANCY
Well, go to hell!

She walks away towards the exit. Voland looks at her, particularly her buttocks and her legs.

VOLAND
in a totally changed voice Nancy ...

She slows down.

as above Nancy!

She stops abruptly.

as above Nancy! Most faithful of all friends!

Nancy turns around abruptly.

NANCY
Who told ... how d'you know ...
VOLAND
interrupts her, in his own voice again And one of the most charming, most fearless women, I'd like to add ...
NANCY
returning to the table slowly You were there! You murdered Maestro!

Voland raises his eyebrows, smiles ironically, and remains silent.

Bewildered, stammering Of course I mean, you <u>tried</u> to murder him ...

Voland smiles and remains silent. With trembling hands Nancy pours herself a glass of champagne and empties it in one go.

Agitated, to herself You're a killer, aren't you? You must be a killer!
VOLAND
laughs, but there is a tender look in his eyes Yes! I confess, I'm a cold-blooded contract killer! Are you feeling better now?
NANCY
gets her cell phone from her handbag I'll call the police ...

Nancy dials, then holds the cell phone to her ear.

VOLAND
turns to have a look at Berlioz, who approaches them beaming with delight. Mike! Nice you are back with us!
BERLIOZ
Professor! Nancy! Who're you calling? *Berlioz snatches her cell phone from her hand and holds it*

to his ear.The cops? Have you gone crazy? *He cuts off the connection*

NANCY
upset Mike! He tried to ...

She changes her mind and goes silent with embarrassment

BERLIOZ
Nancy lacks a sense of humour when it comes to men who flirt too ... well ... passionately ... Once it used to be quite different!

EXT. - A PARK – NIGHT

A lady's beautiful legs are getting out of a car. On one leg there is a run. Her face is shown. It's MAGGIE. *She looks tired and worried, her hair is dishevelled.*

BERLIOZ
(v.o.) But since her bosom friend Maggie started living like a nun …. more than three years ago ...

Maggie walks towards a large house in a futuristic style. At the main entrance a neon sign reads: Private Clinic for Mental Rehabilitation - Dr. Stravinsky. *She enters.*

NANCY
(v.o.) interrupts him angrily You leave Maggie out!

INT. - HALL OF DR. STRAVINSKY'S CLINIC

At the door two muscular caregivers are standing. Maggie approaches a desk behind which SISTER PRISCILLA *is sitting. She lifts her head and smiles at Maggie in a friendly way.*

SISTER PRISCILLA
Good evening! What can I do for you?

Before Maggie can answer, JUDY*, Ryukhin's nurse from the retirement home, who already appeared on the party room scene, comes to the reception desk.*

JUDY
Ms. Ryukhin? Maggie? At last!

Sister Priscilla winces and stares at Maggie.

MAGGIE
Judy! What happened?
JUDY
whispering He kept on shouting he had seen the devil ... and this is why Mrs. Mantler thought he ought to be taken ...
SISTER PRISCILLA
in a low voice You are Maggie?

MAGGIE
reserved My name's Rita Ryukhin ... I'm the patient's granddaughter ...
RYUKHIN
(v.o.) Maggie! Maggie!

Ryukhin is sitting in his wheelchair next to the first door in a long corridor. Maggie and Judy join him, Sister Priscilla follows them.

INT. - PROF. STRAVINSKY'S OFFICE

Maggie squats in front of Ryukhin, who is sitting in his wheelchair. She holds his hands.

MAGGIE
Grandpa! Everything will be all right!
RYUKHIN
upset He's here, Maggie! In Hollywood!
MAGGIE
D'you mean the devil?
RYUKHIN
impatiently Well, who else?

Short pause, during which Ryukhin scrutinizes Maggie's face to find out whether she is taking him seriously.

He was about to have a conversation with Nancy and Mike!
MAGGIE
Oh! Weren't ... they ... scared?
RYUKHIN
Maggie! Are you kidding me? Of course he didn't show them his true face.

DR. STRAVINSKI *is shown. He is leaning on the front of his desk. He is still young, but his serious and relaxed manner creates a competent and soothing impression. His office has stylish and classy furniture.*

DR. STRAVINSKY
But to you, Mr. Ryukhin, he showed his true face ... Did he have ... horns?
RYUKHIN
obviously didn't hear the last question All the time he kept gazing just at her ... Nancy! As if he wanted ... to devour her ... alive ... with his eyes!

Maggie stands up, turns around, and takes a few steps towards the wall, where a large oil portrait of Sigmund Freud is hanging. She wants to hide the fact from Ryukhin that she has to laugh. Dr. Stravinsky's eyes are following her.

MAGGIE
suppresses laughter Horrible! Poor Nancy!
RYUKHIN
Poor Nancy?! You gotta be kidding! She liked it! Instead of running away ... she seemed to enjoy it!

Maggie, both hands pressed against her mouth, desperately fights an outburst of laughter.

DR. STRAVINSKY*severely* Mr. Ryukhin ... My question was: What did the devil look like?
RYUKHIN
He looked exactly like Bezdomny had described him! The one eye, the other eye, the crooked mouth, the crowns on his teeth ... everything!
MAGGIE
Who's Bezdomny?
DR. STRAVINSKY
Bezdomny? A friend of yours?

EXT. - NIGHT

The frame is black and white, the whole scene is in the style of a silent movie from the early 1920s. It is pitch dark. In the background there is a tiny flickering light, which keeps coming nearer. Gradually it becomes recognizable what it is: a big altar candle, which is held by a young man who is striding towards the camera. He is wearing an open striped pyjama jacket, so that one can see his naked chest. There is an icon depicting Jesus Christ clipped to it with a safety pin. Some drops of blood are visible on his chest and his jacket. His big eyes are surrounded by black make-up, his thin lips are equally made up in black. His acting looks exalted according to present-day's taste. With his free hand he gesticulates, touches his hair, knocks on his chest, etc. His lips are moving, but we cannot hear what he is saying. From time to time he turns around and points at the darkness behind him. His face varies between fear and a kind of resignation. Then again he pulls faces in order to describe what Satan looked like. With his hand he indicates the gesture of beheading. Finally tears run down his face in close-up.

RYUKHIN
(v.o.) He was your grandfather, Maggie!
MAGGIE
(v.o.) Bezdomny? Mom's dad was Irish …
RYUKHIN
(v.o.) I mean your father's father!
MAGGIE
(v.o.) <u>You</u> are my father's father!
RYUKHIN
(v.o.) No, I'm not! Dr. Stravinsky, I was a little boy, about 10 years old then ... Bezdomny and my father were friends ... Ivanushka and Sashka … they were inseparable! Both up-and-coming poets ... but after that neither of them ever wrote a single line ... Ponyryova begged me to adopt her son!
MAGGIE
(v.o.) Who's Ponyryova?
DR. STRAVINSKY
(v.o.) Ponyryova?
RYUKHIN
(v.o.) That was when she learned that I was going to work as a cook at the Soviet UN-delegation in New York ... Poor woman ... Bezdomny was Ponyryov's pseudonym, didn't I mention that?
MAGGIE
(v.o.) sadly Bezdomny, the homeless …
DR. STRAVINSKY
(v.o.) Homeless … or ... in a wider sense ... without a home land ... Interesting ...

RYUKHIN
(v.o.) Well, she had to sign an official declaration stating that her husband, owing to his grave mental illness ... had never been able to fullfil his marital .... well ... that she had had a love affair with me and had given birth to a son ... your father, Maggie!

DR. STRAVINSKY
(v.o.) A most exciting story!
MAGGIE
(v.o.) nervously Who cares about these old family stories? I've never met this Bezdomny, and you are and will always be my grandpa!
RYUKHIN
(v.o.) At any rate your biological grandpa is the only person who's ever talked with Satan and survived! If you can call that survival! Because his fear changed as he got older ... he developed a kind of ... Sympathy for the devil! That's what broke him at last ... The other one ... didn't have to suffer so long ... He was lucky ... He was beheaded right away!
MAGGIE
(v.o.) more and more nervously I don't give a damn about my biological grandpa! *Loudly, scared* Who was beheaded?

INT. - SPACIOUS PARTY ROOM - EVENING

BERLIOZ
in high spirits So I will be beheaded ... dear professor, I don't wanna disappoint you, but the heyday of the splatter is over! Did you have this idea?
VOLAND
with bowed head, in a sombre tone, with a Russian accent No, He, always He! He's free to be creative, whereas I always have to do the routine!

He looks at Nancy, enchanted by her, changes his voice completely, and looks as if he was declaring his love to her.

A seven-year-old girl called Annie ...

NANCY
trembling Mike, I think he's got a weapon!
VOLAND
as above For years she has been mad about Wall-E, her room is just a scrap heap ...
BERLIOZ
We've already had little girls who are eager to kill ... even murderous babies ... On the other hand ... did you mention scrap metal? Scrap metal is great! Is the little girl's dad a mad inventor? Or even better, her mom? A vicious handywoman ... or a wicked child as gifted do-it-yourselfer ...yeah ... that would do the trick … *enervated, because Nancy is constantly tugging at his sleeve* Nancy, you're acting like a teenager ... Professor, do you happen to have a chopper hidden under your jacket?

Bassoon materializes next to Voland. This time he is visible only to Nancy. Voland hands him his jacket and his walking stick. Then he steps forward and plants himself in front of Nancy. Slowly he opens his arms. Nancy takes one step back, Voland takes two steps forward so that he nearly touches her.

VOLAND
leeringly, with a Russian accent It will be a pleasure to let Miss Nancy search my body!
BERLIOZ
laughs Ooh la la! What's "ooh la la" in Russian? By the way, professor, are you travelling alone or in company of your spouse?
VOLAND
grumpy, with his eyes lowered and an increasingly stronger Russian accent, while he is putting on his jacket again I have no wife ... I'm alone ... I'm always alone! I'm a poor orphan, nobody loves me!

Berlioz stares at Voland with his mouth open. Then he laughs again.

BERLIOZ
Come on, I'm sure it's not that bad! You're enjoying life! It didn't escape me that you keep looking at Nancy as if you wanted to devour her with your eyes! No wonder she's a little ... a little ... embarrassed ... In the USA it's not common that gentlemen flirt ... in such a way ...
VOLAND
interrupts him in a soft voice, without any accent You only have … *seizes Nancy's wrist with his thumb and index finger and looks at her watch* seven minutes to live, Mike ... Because little Annie fell in love with E.T. recently! She wants to contact him by all means …
BERLIOZ
So what? I have nothing against E.T.! Great film, at that time!
MAN IN A CORRECT DARK SUIT
appears at the back near the glass doors Mike! Are you finally coming? Mike! He doesn't hear me! Nancy?
VOLAND
looking at Nancy tenderly Nothing compares with the imagination of a lonely little girl ...
BERLIOZ
I love children! Professor, they're waiting for me ... a meeting out there ... unfortunately ... *while rushing towards the glass doors* I'll keep it as short as possible ... Order another bottle of champagne, Nancy! And don't let the fiery looks of our professor intimidate you!
NANCY
calling after him Mike! Gimme back my cell! *to Voland, surly* How did this silly clown get here? Do they allow any kind of scum in this hotel without the security giving a damn?
BASSOON
in an unpleasantly loud and rasping voice Mike is right, you definitely lack a sense of humour when dealing with men! This must be punished!

Voland begins to walk towards the exit. He walks with a slight limp and the support of his stick. Nancy stares at Bassoon, who is slurping noisily with outstretched tongue from her champagne flute and leering at her. Suddenly she shudders. A huge black cat, miaowing in a bloodcurdling manner, rockets fast and vertically up between her legs. Her dress slips up to her hip, showing her thighs. She is wearing flesh-coloured stockings and cream-coloured lace garters. The cat lands in her arms, Nancy throws him like a ball to Bassoon, who drops him on the table. The champagne bucket falls over, water and ice are poured out over the cat, which hisses hoarsely.

NANCY
Wh.... what ... what the devil's that???

VOLAND
turns around, looks at her legs with great pleasure I hope you were wearing tear-proof underwear ... Hippo can be pretty passionate!

Bewildered, Nancy looks at him, pulling down her dress. Voland slowly leaves, Bassoon walking by his side. A short, chubby, black-haired man in black working overalls is sitting on the table, rubbing his forehead on his hairline. It is HIPPO, *the demon cat, in his human version.*
HIPPO
shrieking loudly Sire! She's torn out a tuft of my hair!
BASSOON
turning around Serves you right, you horny swine!
NANCY
stares at Hippo, astounded And who are you?

INT. - AUTOMOBILE - NIGHT

Maggie is driving her car.

DR. STRAVINSKY
(v.o.) Your grandfather has played all possible kinds of monsters in dozens of horror shockers, and you wonder why now, in his old age, the devil appears to him? I'd have been surprised if the devil had not appeared to him! Satan in disguise, headless bodies, the vicious clown, the black he-cat, they're all elements of the genre! No need to worry, Ms. Ryukhin! Bezdomny, on the other hand, is interesting. Because ... that's him! Bezdomny, the homeless, Bezdomny, who has no homeland! He's been living in America for 70 years, but now he's overwhelmed by nostalgia for his lost native country! Mental disorders occasionally have something deeply poetic, Maggie ... It's okay to call you Maggie, isn't it? The lyric side of insanity ... that's what fascinates me! D'you understand? The poetry of lunacy, you know ...

In Maggie's expression Dr. Stravinsky's words are reflected gradually. Her face shows agreement, empathy, bitterness and skepticism. Sometimes she nods, sometimes she shakes her head, then she blinks again; occasionally, her features tense up.

Ms. Ryukhin … Maggie ... Even in extreme old age a human being has sexual daydreams! Satan undressing hundreds of women in the moonlight ... not bad! Artistical erotic fantasies are rare!

Maggie smiles and wipes off a tear.

DR. STRAVINSKY
(v.o.) Go now ... go home, Maggie! You needn't worry about your brave grandfather ... we'll give him a mild sedative, and in a couple of days he'll be able to go back to his retirement home and his fiancée!

INT. - SPACIOUS PARTY ROOM - EVENING

Nancy is looking in the direction of Voland and Bassoon.

NANCY
Hey! Where d'you wanna go? You forgot your cat!

She looks at the table. Both the black cat and the short chubby guy are gone.

INT. - IN FRONT OF TWO ELEVATORS

Voland, followed by Bassoon and Hippo (as little man), is about to enter one of the elevators.

NANCY
running after them, calls from a distance Wait!

When she reaches the elevator, the three have already got in. The illuminated display is pointing upwards. She enters the second elevator.

INT. - LONG HOTEL CORRIDOR

Nancy steps out of the elevator, looks left, then right. She sees the three walking slowly along the corridor not far away. She runs after them, but the distance doesn't decrease. The corridor seems to extend. Nancy takes off her high heel shoes to be able to run faster, nevertheless she doesn't reach the three. They stop in front of a door. Hippo the cat stands upright on two paws (he just about reaches Bassoon's chest) and inserts a magnet card into the door slit. At the same time he turns his head to Nancy and winks at her. The door opens, Hippo steps aside, bows respectfully, and puts his left paw on his chest. Bassoon bows his head, too. Both let Voland enter and step inside after him. The door slams. Flabbergasted Nancy has watched them. Presently she walks to the door and reads the room number.

NANCY
whispers, horrified and breathless This is Mike's room!

She lifts the back of her hand to her mouth to suppress a groan. From outside a bloodcurdling female scream rings out. Nancy runs to the open window at the end of the corridor and looks down.

EXT. - A GARDEN - NIGHT

Berlioz's severed head is lying in a flower bed, his body a bit further away. In-between there is a bloody hedge trimmer with its motor still whirring. Muffled ringtone.

INT. - AUTOMOBILE - NIGHT

Maggie is holding a cell phone to her ear.

MAGGIE
Hi Nancy! Are you taking a shower? Please call me back! I'm awfully worried about Val! Anyway, I'll be there soon ... 20 minutes at the most!

She switches on the car radio. The Dream of Witches' Sabbat *from Hector Berlioz'* Symphonie fantastique *rings out. Maggie listens, her face relaxes a little, she takes a deep breath and enjoys the music. Suddenly a newsreader's voice interrupts the music.*

VOICE FROM THE CAR RADIO
We interrupt our late-evening concert for a sad announcement. The well-known New York TV-producer Michael Berlioz was found dead in the patio garden of a Hollywood hotel some minutes ago. As soon as we learn further details, we'll be right back ...

The music comes in again.

MAGGIE
Good God! What an evening ... The bastard is dead! Nancy, where are you?! Why don't you call back? *She holds the phone to her ear and listens.* Damn it, why doesn't she answer?

The volume of the music decreases. The voices of Bassoon and Hippo are suddenly heard on the radio.

BASSOON
in an unncomfortably raspy voice Look at her, Hippo! The unwashed hair!
HIPPO
yelling loudly
Not even a broom would leave the house with such a hairstyle!

Maggie touches her hair and loosens it up a little bit.

BASSOON
And the smudged mascara? And the dark rings under her eyes?

Maggie looks into the rear mirror and tries to wipe off the smudged mascara with a finger.

HIPPO
Yes, yes, ... just look into the mirror ... it's you we mean, you and nobody else!
MAGGIE
switching to another channel
What crappy program is this?

On the radio one can hear a few bars of Bruce Springsteen's song Counting on a Miracle. *Maggie turns up the volume and hums along.*

BASSOON
Yes, what else can you do but hope for a miracle, Maggie!

Maggie winces and switches off the car radio.

EXT. - MOVING CAR – NIGHT

Maggie's car deviates from her lane and almost collides with an oncoming truck. It skids on with squealing tyres until it can move on the appropriate lane again.

BASSOON
(v.o.) Hippo, is there a second dead body on tonight's agenda?
HIPPO
(v.o.) There is, but not hers! Not yet!

INT. - NANCY'S AND MAGGIE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

The house is dark. Maggie comes in through the door. She turns on the light, walks through the hall, storms up the stairs, the light comes on upstairs. She comes right back down to the hall, which gives access to the living room, then walks into the spacious kitchen at the back, switching on the light everywhere. In the kitchen Nancy is squatting in a wicker rocking chair facing the window, with drawn-up knees, her arms wrapped around her legs. Maggie doesn't see her and goes back to the living room. The furniture is rather plain, bright colors prevail. It looks a bit messy, but the overall impression is comfortable. Maggie sits down on the sofa, draws up her knees, and wraps her arms around her legs. In one hand she is holding her cell phone. She takes a deep breath, then she looks at her cell, obviously considering whether she should give it another try. Nancy is standing behind her, but Maggie didn't hear her come.

MAGGIE
whispering to herself He's dead ... Michael A. Berlioz, you shall rot in hell ... Nancy ... where are you? Oh Maestro, come back now he's dead ... Bezdomny! Homeless ... No ... no!

Maggie weeps silently.

EXT. - A STREET IN SUBURBIA - DAY

FLASHBACK
The caption 2013 appears at the bottom of the screen.

Maggie runs breathlessly up to a barred gate. For a moment she stops short when she finds the whole gate wide open. She enters and runs down a steep drive leading to a garage located in the basement.

MAGGIE
shouting Maestro! Maestro!

In front of the entrance to the garage she hesitates again. The door is about one metre open. Maggie tries to push it up, but doesn't succeed. She slips in below.

INT. - A GARAGE – DAY

A big black SUV is standing in the garage. Distraught, Maggie looks around. Squeezing past the car she enters a small attached room, it is a tiny bathroom with a seating bathtub and a toilet. In the bathtub there are a hard disk and a cell phone. Both are melted. Maggie tries to peek through the tinted windows of the car. When she opens a door of the SUV, a heap of filing folders, manuscripts poorly stapled together, and books pours out. Hectically she searches the manuscripts. To that purpose she climbs into the car, which is still crammed with books. A huge red book falls on

her head. It has a title in Cyrillic writing. Simultaneously voices are heard off, with soft background music. It is a waltz from Hector Berlioz' Symphonie fantastique.

A YOUNG GIRL'S VOICE
from afar But mother! It's ladies' choice!
AN ELDERLY LADY'S VOICE
from afar Child! Do you wish to embarrass yourself, your father, and me? Can't you see the way he's dressed?
THE YOUNG GIRL'S VOICE
from afar So what? This is a masked ball! I'm a lady of a harem and you're Calamity Jane! Why isn't Mr. Eisenstein allowed to ...
THE ELDERLY LADY'S VOICE
from afar, interrupting her Do as you please ... Yes ... but ... Gloria ... should you take off the veil, don't forget not to smile!
THE YOUNG GIRL'S VOICE
loud Mr. Eisenstein? I'm Gloria Van der Hael ... may I ask you for this dance?
MALE VOICE
loud Sergey, Gloria, Sergey!

Maggie pulls a thick file from the heaps of books. She climbs out of the car and opens the file. She looks happy again. She kisses the file, then hugs it. A woman is standing at the entrance and is watching her. Maggie notices her.

MAGGIE
Who are you?
WOMAN IN THE GARAGE
This is my new company car! For once I'm also on a lucky streak!

Maggie runs past her out of the garage. She clasps the file against her bosom.

WOMAN IN THE GARAGE
shouts after her You can have all the books! He gave them to me! I've got no time for the garage sale anyway!

END OF FLASHBACK

INT. - HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT

Ryukhin is lying in a latticed bed and sleeping. There is the sound of thunder. It starts raining. Ryukhin wakes up with a faint cry, struggles to sit and gazes into the darkness. His trembling hand feels for the call button above his head, but he cannot reach it. Exhausted, he falls back. Another clap of thunder. Ryukhin winces. The slight creaking of a door. The old man shuts his eyes tightly.

RYUKHIN
in a loud, cracking voice There he is! That's him!

A shadowy figure opens the French window, which is located behind Ryukhin's bed, and slips into the room almost noiselessly. The rain stops. The full moon appears between the clouds. The figure is a man in somewhat oversized pajamas. On his head he is wearing a dark knit cap with something

glittering on it. It is the MAESTRO.

MAESTRO
whispering It's me, not him! Don't shout so loudly!
RYUKHIN
more quietly, breathlessly gasping for air Who's "me"?

The Maestro takes a chair and sits down beside the bed, facing the window. The moon is shining on his face. On his cap the letter "M", made of tiny adhesive stars, is glittering.

MAESTRO
If I only knew! I've forgotten it! But please speak more quietly!
RYUKHIN
whispering Thank God! A lunatic! An inmate!
MAESTRO
I'm your next-door neighbor ... We're sharing one balcony ... Some time ago I pinched the key to your French window from Sister Priscilla ... she's a good-hearted and competent person, but a bit absent-minded ... she hasn't noticed so far that the key is missing ... So I can come over every now and then and kill time with a little conversation! What's the matter with you, my dear friend and fellow-sufferer?
RYUKHIN
Oh yes, my friend! I'm so glad you're visiting me! 'cause as long as you're here, he can't get me!
MAESTRO
Who can't get you?
RYUKHIN
Well, the devil! He's here, in Hollywood! And he's after me!
MAESTRO
sadly Uh hu ... I get it …
RYUKHIN
angrily Stravinsky believes I'm just a horny old man who wants to rub one out!
MAESTRO
embarrassed
No, I'm sure he doesn't believe that! He's a very able doctor! Why should he?
RYUKHIN
I'm even engaged! To Amberson! The sweetest girl in town! She’s aged 86, but looks 68! We'll get married soon!
MAESTRO
Congrats!
RYUKHIN
When was the first time you saw an undressed woman?
MAESTRO
I beg your pardon?

EXT. - ON A STREET – NIGHT

FLASHBACK
The frame is black and white, again the whole scene is in the style of a silent movie from the 1920s. A group of people is pouring out of an imposing building. The men are wearing dark suits, the women chic and fashionable dresses. Suddenly the dresses disappear and the women are standing

there in tight and short lingerie. They seem not to notice it. The gentlemen are trying hectically to take off their jackets in order to cover the ladies' nakedness. In vain, because they have become bodiless gentlemen's suits, who cannot manage to pull off their clothes. Passers-by are leering, but are horrified as soon as they see a moving suit in which there is no body. They run away. Whistling policemen hurry to the scene and try to push the half-naked women back into the building. At the sight of the empty suits they drop their whistles, and they either faint or run away as well. A little boy is watching with his eyes wide open. An around 30-year-old man is standing next to him. With strangely lifeless eyes he also watches, but only for a short moment. Then he ruffles his hair and covers his eyes with both backs of his hands.

Ryukhin
(v.o.) I was ten years old ... The women were all gorgeous, that's for sure! There were hundreds of them! Young ones, old ones, fat ones, skinny ones, all of them beauties! Even the ugly ones were pretty! Satan willed it that way! It was this lingerie, that's why! Short, transparent vests, made from a material ... like woven moonbeams ... yes, it was full moon ... same as tonight ... and tiny panties ... a lot of them didn't have any panties on, though ... you know ...
MAESTRO
(v.o.) No! I don't know anything! What am I supposed to know?
RYUKHIN
(v.o.) Well, they were wearing garter belts! And nothing under them! My father said it was the devil's work!
MAESTRO
(v.o.) What! It was your father who took you to a house of pleasure?

RYUKHIN
(v.o.) his voice becoming fainter Lots of the men of the militsiya fainted when they saw the empty suits! It looked real funny, but my father and I didn't feel like laughing! 'Cause news had already got out that the head of this famous literary critic had disappeared...

END OF FLASHBACK

INT. - HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT

MAESTRO
(v.o,) deeply sad Poor friend, you've really got it! But don't worry, Dr. Stravinsky will cure you!

Ryukhin is lying in his bed, breathing heavily.

RYUKHIN
his voice fading At home my mother slapped me because I had wet my pants ... the ugly ones were the most beautiful ... they stood there like transfigured ... Satan willed it that way ...

Ryukhin stops breathing. His eyes become glassy. He is dead. The room is silent. The Maestro looks at the moon. Slowly he shakes his head.

EXT. - A STREET – DAY

FLASHBACK

The caption 2012 appears at the bottom of the screen

Behind the barred gate already seen on an earlier scene, Maggie is standing, ringing the bell impatiently. It is pouring with rain. With her large square bag she is trying to protect her head from the rain. She is wearing a pearly gray beret, an ecru raincoat with a belt, dark, opaque tights, and light-colored bootees. She is shouting to somebody into the camera and rattles at the gate.

MAESTRO
(v.o.) Undressed woman?

Long and repeated ringing

INT. - GARAGE FLAT – DAY

The Maestro looks up, fascinated. On the floor there are heaps of books, manuscripts, and single sheets of paper.

MAGGIE
(v.o.) We talked on the phone this morning! I'm coming because of the laptop! Someone told me you were ... just ... in the garage! You are there! I can see you! Why don't you open?

The Maestro takes a few steps towards the door, stumbles over a heap of books, and falls flat. Then, in order to struggle to his feet, he leans on a chair which is loaded with manuscript pages. The chair falls over and the Maestro gets entangled in it.

MAGGIE
Ouch! I'll come and help you!

EXT. - A STREET - DAY

With acrobatic skill Maggie starts to climb over the barred gate. When she is on the other side and is about to jump, the Maestro obviously manages to press the buzzer, so that the gate suddenly opens wide and hits a wall. Maggie gets jammed between the gate and the wall. Her belt gets caught on a hook in the wall. Maggie pulls off the belt, her coat opens, we can see that she is wearing a super-short miniskirt. She kicks herself away from the wall with both feet, so the door swings back, and Maggie can finally jump down. She runs down the short and steep asphalt drive and quickly slips through the glass door.

MAESTRO
(v.o.)
Maggie was the first female being I had ever seen in my life ... so it seemed to me then ...

INT. - GARAGE FLAT – DAY

MAGGIE AND MAESTRO
simultaneously Did you hurt yourself?

MAGGIE AND MAESTRO
simultaneously No, not at all!

Both smile at each other for a moment. The Maestro closes the glass door. Maggie takes off her coat and briskly takes off her beret, so that some drops of water spray the Maestro's face. He and Maggie shake hands. Maggie quickly leads the way, kicking aside, to the left and to the right, the books and bundles of paper lying on the floor.

MAESTRO
narrating Her movements were brisk and lively, and at the same time so graceful ...

While walking Maggie suddenly turns around.

MAGGIE
surprised and sympathetic You live in the garage?

MAESTRO
I've got everything I need here, there's even a seating bathtub …

The Maestro loses his balance and bumps against a bookshelf. A huge red book falls from the highest shelf, at the last moment the Maestro pulls Maggie away, the edge of the volume hits him right on the head.

MAGGIE
looks up, then at the heavy tome, saucily Thanks for saving my life!

The only chair broke just a moment ago, so Maggie climbs onto the bunk bed and puts the laptop on her lap. The Maestro sits down beside her and watches her, fascinated. Maggie works fast and in a concentrated manner. A thin trickle of blood flows over the Maestro's forehead and the side of his nose.

MAGGIE
It wasn't so bad as it looked at first! I think it's working again!

Both stare at the black screen. Slowly, from the top to the bottom, a black and white picture is uploaded. It is a photo of the Soviet film director Sergey Eisenstein.

MAGGIE
Oh! Who's that? He looks so sad!

She turns to the Maestro and sees the blood on his face.

MAESTRO
This is ...

Maggie looks frightened. She kneels on the bed and looks at the Maestro's forehead, who is half-sitting and half-lying.

MAGGIE
It's an excellent idea that the firm orders us technicians on external duty always to have a first-aid

kit with us.

Maggie's breasts touch the Maestro's chest, her face is quite close to his. Skillfully and carefully, she tapes his cut up.

END OF FLASHBACK

INT. - HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT

The Maestro is sitting on his chair, the moon is shining on his face. The "M" on his knit cap and two trickles of tears on his cheeks are glistening. He is breathing heavily.

MAGGIE
(v.o.) You're breathing heavily ... You've probably got fever ... because of the wound ... But that won't hurt you! Fever is good! Fever heals!

EXT. - GARAGE DRIVE – DAY

FLASHBACK
Maggie and Maestro are walking towards the barred gate. The sun is shining again. The Maestro has a large adhesive tape on his forehead. He is holding his knit cap in his hand.

MAGGIE
takes the cap from his hand I'll take that with me! It was my fault, I shouldn't have turned around so suddenly!

MAESTRO
Yeah, right!
MAGGIE
No, no! Actually it was <u>your</u> fault! But I'm a helpful person!

END OF FLASHBACK

INT. - HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT

The Maestro sits facing the moon.

MAGGIE
(v.o.) I'll bring it back in a couple of days! Washed and mended! It has a huge hole! Such a murderous book!

INT. - GARAGE FLAT - DAY

FLASHBACK

MAESTRO
narrating It was two weeks later that she came back.

Maggie takes off her coat and beret.

MAGGIE
I'm sorry it took so long ... I was in New York! Did you miss …

The Maestro nods several times.

MAESTRO
interrupting her I thought I'd never again ...
MAGGIE
keeps on talking ... your cap? Some men love their cap more than anything in the world!
MAESTRO
Not me! Not me!

Maggie spots the screen with the Eisenstein-photo.

MAGGIE
Oh! He's also back! *She looks at the screen and the Maestro alternately* Glad to see you again, sad stranger!
MAESTRO
This is Eisenstein!

Maggie raises her eyebrows.

Not Einstein ... Eisenstein!
MAGGIE
I know!*With a perfect Russian pronunciation* Sergey Mikhailovic Eisenstein, Soviet film director! I'm not so ignorant as you think!

MAESTRO
No, not at all! By no means! Your pronunciation ...

With her foot Maggie flicks through the huge red book, which is still lying on the floor.

MAGGIE
reading in Russian The history of Soviet film ...
MAESTRO
You read Russian perfectly ...
MAGGIE
interrupting him Here's your cap ... I'm half-Russian ... but I gotta go now!

She hurries up the drive. The Maestro is standing in the garage door and watching her. When she has reached the barred gate at the top, she stops and turns around to look at him.

MAGGIE
Actually you deserve to be punished! Without knowing me you took me for an ignorant!

She hurries back down the drive and stops in front of him.

MAGGIE
As a punishment ... I'll kiss you!

The Maestro closes his eyes. Maggie gives him a gentle kiss on the tip of his nose and strides up the drive backwards.

MAGGIE
Oh ... Your nose is quite pale! Soon it'll drop off, and then it will strut with a stick and a bowler-hat through the studios of Hollywood!
MAESTRO
looks at her adoringly Gogol!
MAGGIE
smiles back lovingly and nods Yes! Nikolai ... Vassilievich ... Gogol!

END OF FLASHBACK

INT. - HOSPITAL ROOM – NIGHT

The Maestro turns slightly to Ryukhin's bed. The latter is lying on his back, his open glassy eyes seem to look upwards.

MAESTRO
(v.o.) Listen closely, my dear friend, 'cause it's getting real exciting now! She came back in the evening!
MAGGIE
(v.o.) Your nose is still there! Seems I didn't make much of an impression on you!

INT. - GARAGE FLAT – EVENING

FLASHBACK
The golden light of the sunset shines into the garage flat. Maggie and Maestro stand opposite each other.

MAESTRO
My mind is made up: I'll never again wash the tip of my nose!
MAGGIE
in an exalted, sombre tone Oh ... I'm afraid I have bad news for you ... I got my next customer tomorrow morning at 8 ... it's no use driving home, so I'll spend the night here ...
MAESTRO
interrupting her But this isn't bad news ...
MAGGIE
interrupting him Indeed ... very bad news for you ... 'cause after this night ... you'll never go into your seating bathtub again …

MAESTRO
looks questioningly, then bit by bit he understands. He blinks Oh no! Oh yes! Yes? Yes! Oh yes!

Maggie smiles and slowly nods, again and again.

Maggie and Maestro are lying in bed, undressed. They are exchanging kisses and other caresses. Maggie frequently giggles.

MAGGIE
Eisenstein's Travels?
MAESTRO
No! Eisenstein's Tr...

Before he can utter the word, Maggie presses her lips on his

MAGGIE
in exaggerated amazement Eisenstein's Trembles??
MAESTRO
No! Tr... ouch ...
before he can utter the word, Maggie tenderly bites his upper lip
MAGGIE
as above Eisenstein's Tribes??? *She turns over, so that the Maestro is lying under her*
Now I've got it: Eisenstein's Troubles!

Early morning. Maggie, in her T-shirt and panties, is kneeling on the bed and watching the sleeping Maestro.

MAGGIE
Maestro ...

The Maestro opens his eyes.

MAESTRO
Maggie ... Is it that late already?
MAGGIE
Maestro ... You really are a masterful … Maestro!
MAESTRO
I ... what?
MAGGIE
Maestro... may I call you Maestro? From now on I'll always call you Maestro!
MAESTRO
embarrassed and flattered Well, you know ... you're the reason why ... entirely ... you must know, I'm usually not that … let's say ... stormy ... It's because of you, solely because of ...
MAGGIE
interrupting him While you were sleeping, I was reading! The first part ... It's the most brilliant screenplay I've ever come across! And I've read loads of screenplays, believe me! Nancy only accepts roles that I like!
MAESTRO
disappointed and flattered at the same time I'm glad you ...
MAGGIE
interrupts him I gotta go now!
She has jumped off the bed and dresses quickly. The Maestro comes down from the bed as well.

Energetically, she flings the glass door open and runs up the drive. The Maestro presses the buzzer. He is standing in the door.

MAESTRO
shouting after her You're half-Russian? Who's Nancy?
MAGGIE
flings the gate open and lets it slam behind her I'm a rushing Russian! See you tomorrow!

Again and again Maggie runs up and down the steep garage drive. She always carries her large square bag. Only her clothes keep changing.

MAESTRO
as narrating voice She came every day and she left every day ... She never stayed longer than a few hours, rarely for a whole night ...

Maggie takes a small toolbox from her large bag. She repairs the broken chair. The Maestro is holding the chair while she is knocking in some nails.

MAGGIE
Me and Nancy as *Margret* in New York! It was fantastic! I as her moral support and assistant wardrobe mistress, she as the rescuer of the Met! First cast: gastric flu! Second cast: multiple fracture of her ankle! My cool Nancy boards the next plane and makes her début as *Margret* in *Wozzeck* on the very same evening! She had rehearsed that role only for a concert performance, though, here in L.A. The audience and the critics were enthusiastic …

Maggie is sitting in front of the laptop and is reading out. The Maestro is sitting on the table and listening. From time to time he stands up and looks at the screen, too.

MAESTRO
as narrating voice After *Eisenstein in Western Europe*, she read *Eisenstein in Hollywood*. Then the third part, *Eisenstein in Mexico*. And eventually the fourth and last part, *Back in the USSR.*When she had finished, she started all over again ... Then she read all of it one more time ... and another time ...

Maggie puts on her clothes, and the Maestro is watching her.

MAESTRO
as narrating voice She said she didn’t want Nancy to return into an empty house after a hard day's work.

Maggie is sitting next to the bunk bed in her underwear. The Maestro, who is sitting on the bed, holds her right hand and watches it closely.

MAESTRO
as narrating voice She said the two rings had nothing to do with her two divorced marriages.

MAGGIE
These are our parents' wedding rings ... They died in a traffic accident.

Maggie and Maestro are standing in the door.

MAESTRO
Stay! Does your sister really need so much moral support?
MAGGIE
confused Sister? Why sister? Nancy is not my sister!
MAESTRO
'Cos ... I guess you once said "our parents" ... the two wedding rings ...
MAGGIE
hurrying up the drive
One wedding ring is from my mother, the other from Nancy's father!

When she has arrived at the gate, she runs down again.

MAGGIE
But maybe we are sisters ... who knows!

Maggie builds in a bookshelf under the bunk bed. The Maestro loads it with books and manuscripts. The table with the chair is now standing in the middle of the room.

MAESTRO
as narrating voice I told her that I'd also been married twice ... Seems I'd also lived together with a few women ... It was when I was teaching film history ... and also later, when I occasionally wrote dialogues for sitcoms ... She mentioned casually that as a child she had overheard a conversation between Nancy's mother and her own mother ...

Maggie and Maestro kiss each other good-bye passionately at the garage door.

MAGGIE
Neither my mother nor hers knew if our daddies were really our daddies … *Maggie runs up the drive. When she has arrived at the top, she runs back to the Maestro, who is standing in the door.* ... If Nancy's dad was really my dad and my dad Nancy's dad ... Or if Nancy's dad was also my dad ... or my dad also Nancy's dad ... they were laughing ...

Again Maggie runs up the drive. When she is at the top she runs back down to the Maestro, who is standing in the door.

MAGGIE
They were the best of friends ... they talked about it as if it was the most natural thing in the world ... they were laughing ... loudly! Merrily!

Maggie and Maestro are lying in bed. The Maestro is caressing Maggie's hair and face.

MAGGIE
A couple of hours later, on their way back, all four of them were dead ... On that day ... they had taken me and Nancy to the holiday camp in our van. I hadn't understood much of the stuff I'd overheard ... after all a nine-year-old has no idea of partner-swapping and stuff ... I was going to ask my mother ... Nancy was seven ... she knows nothing about it ... nobody knows ... you're the first I'm telling about it ... maybe Nancy is my half-sister ...

MAESTRO
interrupting her Who cares ... She's your best friend, and that is much more than just a sister ... Blood is just a means of transport ... a liquid organ, consisting of water, pigment, protein, fat, sugar, salt ... what else ...?
MAGGIE
cheerful ... Vanilla ice-cream and raspberry sauce ... would go down very well now ...
thoughtful again Maybe she is me, and I'm her? Of course I mean concerning our family names!

INT. - GARAGE FLAT – NIGHT

From his bunk bed the Maestro is watching Maggie, who is sitting in front of the laptop, reading, and weeping. When her sobbing becomes louder and louder, the Maestro sits up, wanting to comfort her. At that moment, however, Maggie bursts into loud laughter and slaps her thighs.

END OF FLASHBACK

INT. - HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT

The Maestro sits facing the moon.

MAESTRO
Her most favorite thing was laughing! Her second most favorite thing was crying!

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L.A. Lights (01/12)

INT. - GARAGE FLAT - NIGHT

FLASHBACK
Maggie looks up to Maestro. Her face is still wet with tears, snot is running out of her nose. But she's beaming.

MAGGIE
Doug Fairbanks, Syd Grauman, Jack Pickford, Charlie Chaplin, and Sergey in the Moroccan sauna!

Continuous honking. Then the ringing of the bell.

EXT. - GARAGE DRIVE – DUSK

Nancy is coming down the drive. She is carrying a large parcel. Behind her, on the other side of the street, one can see the colorful lights of some houses and frontyards covered with Christmas decorations.

INT. - GARAGE FLAT – DUSK

Maggie is waiting behind the glass door. Next to it a Christmas tree decorated with blinking colorful lights is standing.

MAGGIE
She's here! My Nancy! The most faithful of all friends!

The maestro, moved, looks at Maggie, glances quickly several times at Nancy, then back to Maggie and again to Nancy, as if to determine any possible family resemblance. He unwraps Nancy's present. It is two director's chairs. The back of the first one reads Margarita*, the back of the other* Maestro.

INT. - NANCY'S AND MAGGIE'S HOUSE – NIGHT

Maggie has dozed off on the sofa. Nancy is standing in the shadow behind her. Maggie briefly sobs in her sleep. Nancy touches her shoulder with her hand.

MAGGIE
jumps up from the sofa with a muffled scream Nancy! Oh my God, you really scared me! Have you been standing here long? I didn't see you!

Nancy does not react.

What's up? Stupid question! Oh Nancy, I heard it on the radio! Was it a heart attack?

Nancy groans and lets out brief, joyless laughter.

NANCY
imitating Voland's Russian accent and his voice Zero heart attack!
MAGGIE
confused No? What did he ... so suddenly ... sit down, please ... you're in a state ... I know ... I'm in a state, too ... what a ghastly evening …

Nancy sits down next to Maggie and remains silent.

So ... What happened?

Nancy shakes her head.

On the radio they said it happened at the hotel ... in the patio ...

Nancy shakes her head.

No?

Maggie grabs the remote control and switches on the TV, which is standing in front of the sofa.

NANCY
tries to snatch away the remote control from Maggie Please don't! I don't want that!
NEWSCASTER ON TV
A mysterious bloody deed was perpetrated in Downtown Los Angeles a few hours ago. The mutilated body of New York TV-producer Michael Berlioz was found in the garden of the Old Bombay Hotel, where a party was in progress after the private preview of his first cinema film. The police are talking about assassination, but have imposed a news embargo regarding the details.

Maggie is petrified, so that Nancy manages to snatch the remote control from her and switch off the TV.

MAGGIE
Mutilated body?

She notices some redness on Nancy's left wrist.

MAGGIE
What's this?

Nancy slips off her watch and looks at her wrist closely. Maggie is looking on.

NANCY
What is this?
MAGGIE
You're asking me? I'm asking you! This is a horrible burn! I'm sure it hurts like hell! Who did that to you? It ought to be ...
NANCY
interrupts her That was him ... It doesn't hurt …
MAGGIE
Mike tortured you? That looks like it came from a glowing handcuff ... where did he ... how did he ... and then you ...
NANCY
interrupts her Stop it!
MAGGIE
And Val ... Val was there, too! No wonder he imagined having seen the devil! Mike was the devil! Mad Mike! Like Jack Nicholson in *Shining*! Are there open fireplaces in the Old Bombay? Or ... or ... Was there a barbecue in the garden?

NANCY
Be quiet …

Maggie stands up from the sofa with the remote control in her hand and keeps a safe distance from Nancy. She is looking for a news channel.

MAGGIE
I wanna know at long last what's going on!

NEWSCASTER ON TV
...In his breast pocket a cell phone was found, from which the police had been called shortly before. The cell phone belongs to the singer and actress Nancy Procopios, Berlioz's ex-wife and leading actress in his film. Ms. Procopios stated she didn't know why her cell phone was near the victim ... *a hedge trimmer is shown* With such a battery-driven hedge trimmer Michael Berlioz' head was severed from his body …

Nancy grabs the remote control from Maggie and turns off the TV.

MAGGIE
thunderstruck You beheaded him … *trying hard to suppress a nervous chuckle* How'd you get the hedge trimmer … *has to giggle more and more*... and Val ... sorry ... I know ... I shouldn't laugh when a human being loses his life in such a horrendous way ... that's not nice of me ... I admit ... although this person was a swine ... Val was there ... he must … *shaking with laughter* he must have felt like in the old times, on the set of a horror film! s*tops laughing abruptly* How come your clothes have no blood stains ...
NANCY
Why d'you think Val was there when Mike died? He was long gone then!
MAGGIE
But Val must have been there! The manager of the retirement home said he should be taken to a psychiatric hospital ... And there he talked a lot of rubbish ... things that he claimed happened during his childhood ... a severed head that had disappeared …
NANCY
Mike's head hasn't disappeared ... Not yet ...
MAGGIE
What's that you're saying? Val told me you and Mike had been talking with the devil ... who looked horrible ...
NANCY
Horrible? No ... rather ...
MAGGIE
interrupts her There was something wrong with his eyes ... and his teeth ...
NANCY
His eyes are beautiful ... but sad ... so sad! I didn't notice anything unusual about his teeth ... and his smile was ... melancholic …
MAGGIE
Stop it! You're scaring me! Val also mentioned a clown ... a vicious clown ...
NANCY *interrupts her* ... and a huge black cat …
MAGGIE
Did you ... rehearse this scene with Val? Why? To scare shit out of me? What for?
NANCY
Now listen, Maggie! You've known me since I was born, and we grew up together like sisters! But

we're much more than just sisters, we're friends! I'll tell you everything, and you gotta believe me! No matter how crazy it sounds!

INT. - HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT

Ryukhin is lying rigidly in bed, his dead eyes seem to be looking straight ahead.

MAESTRO
(v.o.) Maggie insisted that we should drink to Nancy's engagement with champagne!

INT. - GARAGE FLAT - EVENING

FLASHBACK
Nancy, Maggie, and Maestro are sitting at the table, which is full of paper plates, glasses, and bottles. The Maestro wears his black knitted hat, adorned with a 'M' made up of countless tiny glittering stars. In the background stands the small Christmas tree with its twinkling colorful lights, whose reflections occasionally show up on one or another face.The laptop with the Eisenstein-screen saver is lying open on the bunk bed. Nancy laughs and holds up both hands to show that she isn't wearing any ring besides the two wedding rings.

MAESTRO
narrating voice But Nancy insisted she had only gone out with him a couple of times and, admittedly, had had a great time!
MAGGIE
Having a great time, she calls it! I call that ...

Nancy stops her by covering her mouth with her hand

Okay ... okay ... I'll just say that much: He has a magic flute!

MAESTRO
laughing Uh hu ...
MAGGIE
Flynn plays flute with the Los Angeles Philharmonics ...
MAESTRO
Okay ... lovely ...
NANCY
laughing The clarinet!
MAESTRO
Even lovelier ... Congrats!

On the table there are no plates and no food left, only some glasses and bottles of beer and wine.

MAGGIE
in a loud and tipsy voice A French ... an English ... a Spanish version ... simultaneously!

She has a few sips of red wine, then she continues her story, gesticulating There were … *she starts counting with her fingers* let me see ... two actors playing Satan ... one for French and Spanish, the

other for English ... then there was ... the angelic late-Victorian virgin ... in fact there were three of them! A Spanish, an English, and a French virgin ... the juvenile head ... he was cast twice ... one actor for the Spanish, the other for the English and the French version! It was hell! Typically enough, the title of the film was *The End of the World* ... Abel Gance, the director, nearly lost his mind! When Eisenstein came to see him on the set, he flung his arms around his neck, sobbing … *While Maggie is talking, Nancy is laughing louder and louder, so that Maggie has to shout to remain audible. The Maestro sometimes looks at the shouting Maggie, sometime at the chuckling Nancy. One can see that he is happy, that he even feels like in paradise.*

EXT. - GARAGE DRIVE – NIGHT

The garage flat with the lighted Christmas tree in front of the glass door is getting smaller and smaller, until it is only a spot of light on a black background. Even this spot disappears. Instead, the full moon becomes visible.

NANCY
(v.o.) still laughing That would be something for Berlioz!

MAESTRO
(v.o.) Berlioz? The composer?!

END OF FLASHBACK

MAESTRO
(v.o.) I'm asking you, my dear friend: could such an idyll go on like that? Tell me!

INT. - HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT

Ryukhin's corpse with the glassy dead eyes, seeming to stare straight ahead.

MAESTRO
(v.o.) You seem sad and remain silent, dear friend ... You've lived long enough to know that such good luck can't last forever ... If I continued my story, you couldn't get any more sleep tonight, despite Sister Priscilla's injection ... anyway ... it's time for Leroy's inspection round ... I gotta go! Sleep well!

The Maestro's leaving causes some muffled noises. Finally one hears the careful closing of the French window.

INT. - MAGGIE’S BEDROOM - DAY

Everywhere there are books and manuscripts piled up almost to the ceiling. Maggie is in bed, in her pajamas. She is half-sitting and half-lying. On the comforter, she arranges tiny glittering stars to form an 'M'. Next to her there is a manuscript in a spring folder. Nancy is watching her behind a door standing ajar. Her face looks sorrowful.

FLASHBACK

Close-up of Maggie's face, behind it the twinkling lights of the Christmas tree. From outside, the occasional crackle of fireworks can be heard, which becomes more frequent and louder throughout the scene.

NANCY
(v.o.) gloomily Eisenstein is out ...
MAESTRO
(v.o.) The Reds are out in Hollywood ... My script is 40 years late …
NANCY
(v.o.) And Sergey is much too likeable for a commie …
MAGGIE
Right! The chief of the Paris police had already stumbled upon that in 1929! He was in a panic when the supposed Bolshevik brute, during his impromptu speech in fluent French at the Sorbonne, brought the students to the point of laughing themselves into fits and enthusiastically clapping their hands and stamping their feet... the next day, Sergey was expelled from France, and he went to...
NANCY
(v.o.), interrupts her But this script is a masterpiece ... A masterpiece always makes its way ... Be patient ... sooner or later ...
MAGGIE
interrupts her Patient? Are you patiently watching your biological clock ticking? No, you aren't!
MAESTRO
(v.o.) But Maggie ... what kind of comparison is this ...
MAGGIE
tears are trickling over her cheeks It's a suitable comparison! Take a look around, Maestro! You're living in a garage!
MAESTRO
(v.o.) But I've got a seating bath ...
MAGGIE
(v.o.), interrupts him Soon it'll be too late … *beaming* I got it! We'll start in the middle! Like good old Homer in his *Iliad* … We tinker a Trojan Horse! A love story! Eisenstein in Hollywood! He seduces ...
NANCY
(v.o.), interrupts her laughing Helen of Troy? Okay … Marlene Dietrich! No, wait ... Loretta Young? Hey! It's midnight soon!
MAGGIE
No actress! He seduces ... a very young girl ...
MAESTRO
(v.o.) Never! Eisenstein was very reserved and shy with young women, you ought to know! Midnight … Here with the champagne!
MAGGIE
So what! It's the young heiress with the bad teeth, d'you remember?
MAESTRO
(v.o.) Yes, he briefly mentions her in his memoirs, but … I’ve got the bottle!
MAGGIE
sharply What d'you mean, but? He breaks her heart! And then, she breaks his heart! The heiress of a large fortune ... poor Gloria ... rich as hell ...

EXT. - GATEWAY - NIGHT

White, blue, red, green light fountains explode across the entire sky. Maggie and Maestro dance a waltz to their light, their steps wobbly due to the sloping ground; both hold a champagne flute in their hands and sip from it as they dance. A little ways off, Nancy stands, holding a champagne glass in one hand and her mobile phone up in the other, from which waltz music comes. The fireworks noise makes it just recognizable that it is the waltz from the Symphonie Fantastique *by Hector Berlioz.*

NANCY
(v.o), laughing Sorry! It's a hell of a noise!

A loud gong sound echoes from somewhere.

MAGGIE
stands still, raises a toast, drinks Welcome 2013! To Berlioz!

Sound of glass shattering on the asphalt.

MAESTRO
To the new year! To Berlioz!

Sound of glass shattering on the asphalt.

NANCY
(v.o.) The number 13 brings luck! To Mike B.!

Sound of glass shattering on the asphalt.
In the light of the brightly glowing sky, tipsy Maggie, Nancy, and Maestro stumble and laugh in a round dance down the sloping ground.

MAESTRO, MAGGIE, AND NANCY
simultaneously To *The Dollar Princess*!
They repeat it over and over, their voices gradually getting quieter, while white and golden fireworks fountains explode in the sky.

END OF FLASHBACK

The cover of the manuscript is shown in close-up, it reads: The Dollar Princess - by Maestro and Margarita. *Maggie tears off the cover and holds it to the flame of a lighter.*

INT. - HOTEL ROOM – DAY

Voland is standing beside a bed watching BOGG-LEACH, *who is lying facedown on a greenish quilt in his half askew boxer shorts and moaning. When Voland bends down to him, his face becomes visible in the mirror at the end of the bed. Bogg-Leach is startled and covers his nakedness. Then he struggles to turn in bed*

BOGG-LEACH
Who the hell are you? How did you get in? *He reaches for the hotel phone* This is room 477! Send a security man immediately, there's ...
BASSOON
voice on the phone, interrupts him Put down the receiver at once, you son of a bitch, or else I'll crack your nut!

Bogg-Leach drops the receiver, touches both his temples with his hands, and roars with pain.

VOLAND
with a Russian accent You drink too much, my dear Steven! I may call you Steven, right?
BOGG-LEACH
No! You may not! Leave my room immediately!
VOLAND
We talked on the phone yesterday evening ... I'm Professor Voland!
BOGG-LEACH
Never heard ... No phone call ... Beat it, or else ...
VOLAND
interrupts him Alcohol destroys your brain cells, my friend ... Have you forgotten that we had an appointment at eight this morning? Now it's shortly before nine …
BOGG-LEACH
Impossible ... I had a couple of drinks yesterday, I admit, but I had good reason for it! My partner was beheaded! He's lying there, just like that, and his head is lying next to him ... If this is no reason to get pissed ... It could have been me ... No, I didn't talk to no Russian ... why should I? No, no, no!

At the same time Bogg-Leach secretly reaches for his cell phone, which is lying on the bedside table, and hides it under the quilt.

BASSOON
(v.o.) in an unpleasant rasping voice Your Majesty! This cuntstick is trying to dial the emergency service under his quilt!
VOLAND
Well, let him do as he pleases ... as I said, he is sick ... a chronic alcoholic ... by the way, I also own one of these handy gadgets ...

In his hand there is suddenly a cell phone, Voland presses a button and holds the cell to Bogg-Leach's ear

BOGG-LEACH
on Voland's voicemail This is Steven Bogg-Leach from BBL Pictures, Professor Voland ... see you as arranged in the lobby at 8 a.m. tomorrow! I'm looking forward to our meeting, despite the current tragic circumstances!
To Voland This is my voice, sure ... But it's not me ... It's been manipulated ... Child's play for any expert sound technician!

Bassoon appears out of nowhere and sits down on his bed.

And that ugly clown can't impress me, either! I get it! You're from the circus! You're the circus king! Majesty! *forces a laugh*

VOLAND
Hippo, where are you? Quick, serve the coffee to our good Steven, before he goes into delirium tremens!

Hippo (as a cat) steps out of the mirror. He is walking upright on his hind legs. On his front paws he is carrying a small tray with a coffee pot and a cup.

HIPPO
grouchy Sire! Do I really have to serve this impertinent idiot?

Voland nods. Hippo puts the tray on the bedside table, then he pours in some coffee and hands the cup to Bogg-Leach. The latter has a sip. The cell-phone under his quilt rings, Bogg-Leach winces and spills some coffee. The cell keeps ringing.

BASSOON
Go ahead, answer it, you stinker!

Bogg-Leach gets the phone and answers it.

VOICE ON THE PHONE
Where the hell are you? You wanted to be here with this ... this Russian ... at 8.30, and now it's past nine!
BOGG-LEACH
Is it really you, Greg?
VOICE ON THE PHONE
God damn it! I'm sure he's waiting for you in the lobby! That is, if he's patient enough ...
BOGG-LEACH
interrupts him Yeah ... I can see him from here ... I'll join him immediately ... we'll be with you in half an hour at the latest … *hangs up*
BASSOON
Liar!
BOGG-LEACH
looking at Voland, slyly Romish, this senile asshole is up to something ... but he's got the bankers on his side, so I won't drop my guard, and I'll play your little game!

Voland shrugs his shoulders.

HIPPO
yells He's a boozer, a moron, a bloody liar, a lazy bum, and a backstabbing bastard!
BOGG-LEACH
Hey Sire! Is that shaggy cat a genetic mutation from Chernobyl?

With a loud growling and miaowing Hippo jumps at Bogg-Leach and digs his claws into his naked chest. Bogg-Leach shrieks. Hippo turns to Voland.

HIPPO
May I?
VOLAND
Well, okay! We'll need his room for the ball, anyway, in addition to Berlioz's.

Bogg-Leach disappears.

EXT. - TUNDRA - DAY

Bogg-Leach stands shivering in the midst of a barren, snow-spotted landscape. His mouth is wide open in a silent scream. A woman crouches in a trench and extracts rock samples. She wears a green down jacket with a hood, a green mouth guard, and a dust mask with round green lenses. A dosimeter is attached to her left breast pocket. Whispering groans, she reaches back with one hand, straightens up, so that her head sticks out of the trench. She and the half-naked Bogg-Leach, a few meters away, silently fixate each other. Just as she opens her mouth to scream, Bogg-Leach disappears. The green-glassed woman falls to her knees. She takes off the glasses, blows on them, cleans them carefully, and puts them back on.

INT. - HOTEL ROOM – DAY

Bogg-Leach is back in his bed again.

VOLAND
Hippo, you scoundrel! We don't want him to freeze to death, do we?
Hippo (as a human) drapes the quilt over Bogg-Leach's shoulders with exaggerated care. After that Bogg-Leach disappears again.

EXT. - TUNDRA - DAY
Bogg-Leach is sitting on the ground. The greenish quilt puffs out around his body.

In the trench, the green-glassed woman slowly straightens up again. Her head re-emerges from the trench.

BOGG-LEACH
weak voice Help ... Please don't...

GREEN-GLASSED WOMAN
jumps out of the trench and runs screaming away Aiuto! Aiuto! Un marziano!

INT. - MAGGIE'S BEDROOM - DAY

Maggie watches the paper cover burning slowly.

INT. - NANCY’S AND MAGGIE’S LIVING ROOM - DAY

NANCY
on the phone So Amberson takes care of the cremation? We'd like to say farewell to him ... we'll be there in an hour! And ... Dr. Stravinsky ... please make sure that Mr. Maestro doesn't …

INT. - MAGGIE'S BEDROOM – DAY

Maggie is still in bed, strewing the stars all around with her hand.

BASSOON
(v.o.) Look at her, Hippo! Not even on such a day does she forget her sad little ritual!

Maggie jumps up from her bed with a shriek.

HIPPO
(v.o.) The one has a crush with the devil, the other is hopelessly devoted to a dead man!
BASSOON
(v.o.) screaming with laughter They make an odd couple!
HIPPO
(v.o.) yelling in a cracking voice Two hot Hollywoodian chicks! That's what I like!

Maggie flees from her room.

MAGGIE
yelling Nancy! Nancy!

She dashes into Nancy's bedroom.

INT. - NANCY'S BEDROOM – DAY

Nancy is not there. On the floor Nancy's cream-coloured garter is lying. Maggie picks it up. A tuft of black hairs has got caught in it. She hurries downstairs.

INT. - KITCHEN IN NANCY'S AND MAGGIE'S HOUSE - DAY

Nancy is sitting and having a cup of coffee. Maggie rushes in.

MAGGIE
hides the hand carrying the garter Nancy ... What color is Satan's hair?
NANCY
I beg your pardon?
MAGGIE
Aka Professor Voland ... You and Val are playing games with me, and I don't know why, except that you're both bananas!
NANCY
very quietly Maggie, last night,Val … *loud* Graying ... dark blond ... I'm sure he was light blond as a child ... his eyelashes and eyebrows are still quite pale ...
MAGGIE
As a child ... lashes … unbelievable! The fucking cat is right! You really have a crush on him! But yesterday you did it with somebody else! Or ... or was he wearing a black wig? *Laughs* Satan wearing a wig ...
bursts out into a nervous laughing fit.

NANCY
I didn't do it with anybody! Did Hippo tell you that? You mustn't believe him! He's a demon! He's lying! Have you forgotten what I told you yesterday? They are no humans! Voland isn't human, either ... He's ... an illusion … a sham … a mirage ... a phantasm ... a shadow …

Maggie shows Nancy the garter, which is dangling from her fingers.

MAGGIE
I get it ... Voland is a synonym ... And what's this?
NANCY
That's cat's hairs!
MAGGIE
Oh! The fiery cat Hippo is really a charmed black-haired youth ... with pale eyelashes, mind you!
NANCY
interrupts her, bitterly No youth! A stocky, elderly little man ... But that's not important now ... Get ready, please ... we gotta drive to Val, to the clinic …

EXT. - FAIRBANKS SQUARE AND FAIRBANKS BUILDING - DAY

The Fairbanks Building is a nearly 20-story plain cube with a smooth white facade. It is surrounded by some similarly tall office buildings.

INT. - ROMISH'S OFFICE – DAY

A plainly furnished office. Two desks, standing opposite each other, with a screen each. At one desk Greg ROMISH *is sitting, at the other his assistant,* HOLLY *Richardson, who is wearing a headset.*

HOLLY
There's still a cat answering.
ROMISH
She can't do calculations, she can't remember appointments, she can't read any e-mails, she can't make any phone-calls, all she can ever do is "it" ...

Romish picks up the receiver and presses a button. After a few seconds a miaowing voice answers.

HIPPO
voice on the phone, miaowing strongly Hello? Just a moment! Please hold the line!
ROMISH
covers the receiver with his hand You see?

Holly looks embarrassed. Immediately afterwards she stares at the screen, dumbfounded.

HIPPO
voice on the phone, screeching miaowing My boss expresses his high regard for you! But if you dare to disturb him just one more time with this constant ringing, he'll have you thrown out of the window! *hangs up*
ROMISH
yelling Gimme Bogg-Leach, you boozer!
HOLLY
He's hung up! But ... I've got somebody else on the line ... Please have a look at this!

ROMISH
in a voice quivering with anger That was one of his fellow juiceheads! Rather sounded like a crack-junkie! *imitates the miaowing* He sure missed this Russian! Gee, that would have been so important! Especially now that Mike's dead … *to Holly* I owe the whole mess to you, you washout! We don't even know how to reach this Voland, 'cause you went and lost his phone number!

Holly shakes her head emphatically and points at the screen, so that Romish pays attention to it. The screen shows a weeping old man. It is BOGG-LEACH'S FATHER.

BOGG-LEACH'S FATHER
sobbing I've just taken my heart drops! I can't!
ROMISH
Holly! Who's this? What d'you want? Get lost!

Romish cuts off the connection, and Bogg-Leach's father disappears from the screen.

HOLLY
Please, it's Steve's father!

Bogg-Leach's father reappears on the screen.

BOGG-LEACH'S FATHER
sniffling The police don't believe me! They say I'm mad! But it's true! Green aliens have abducted my Stevie! He's in Siberia! It's cold there, he says!

Romish cuts off the connection, Bogg-Leach's father disappears.

ROMISH
to Holly I've told you a thousand times not to connect me with lunatics! Give me Bogg-Leach! Let's try again!
HOLLY
No! I don't dare! This cat ... this cat's voice said he'd throw you out of the win...

ROMISH
interrupts her Big deal! You silly cow!

He presses a button, but seems to change his mind and cuts off the connection immediately. Holly is staring at the screen again, spellbound. Romish is watching, too. A young female pilot is talking into the skype-camera. The roaring of the engine of a helicopter is heard.

FEMALE PILOT
in broken English, with a strong Russian accent, smiling broadly He so brave, your friend. Steven, brave and nice and good ... Typical American ... New York ... oh!

The male co-pilot is shown.

MALE PILOT
with a strong Russian accent, too Your friend very lucky ... Tis good Italian woman, good manner! Very good, very good manner! Only underpants, yuck, why? O.k., blanket, o.k., o.k. o.k. blanket! But why? Hollywood? Film? You Hollywood film, is you not?

The female pilot is shown again. Her face is beaming.

FEMALE PILOT
Yes, yes, yes! You Hollywood! Good old Hollywood!
ROMISH
yelling Bogg-Leach! I'll have you certified! I'm not gonna let you ruin our company, you boozing son of a bitch!
FEMALE PILOT
Bogelitch? Me no Bogelitch ...
BOGG-LEACH
(v.o.) Greg, for Chrissake, listen to me! It was the cat! This fat black cat ... and Voland's an alien ... Greg …

Bogg-Leach is shown. He is wearing a dirty, much too large sweat suit in neon colours. On his head he is wearing an army cap. On his lap the greenish, folded quilt is lying. He is shaking all over.

ROMISH
interrupts him And I'll sue your buddies ... I'll make sure that motherfucker and that tart get deported to their fuckin' Russia!
BOGG-LEACH
takes off his glasses; opens his eyes wide; in a whining voice Greg, Greg, tell me the truth ... is there something in my eyes? Do you see black spots in my eyes?

Romish tries to say something, but the pilot cuts him short

MALE PILOT
You shut up, sir. We now Arkhangelsk, American consul there. We complain. Not me ... me not ... but Nastassya Lukinishna tart? She no tart ... You full of shit ... sir!
FEMALE PILOT
You no Hollywood ... Nyet! You old ... ugly ... bad man you! And crazy! Ha!

INT. - AUTOMOBILE – DAY

Maggie and Nancy are sitting in Nancy's white Volkswagen Beetle Cabriolet. Nancy starts the car, it begins moving. Maggie switches on the car radio.

NEWSREADER
... Mr. Mendoza, aged 48, boasted about the murder in his local bar tonight. After his son's suicide he had announced repeatedly his plans to take revenge on the film industry. Last night was his chance ... He has been interrogated since early this morning.
EXCITED FEMALE VOICE ON THE RADIO
I can only say the best about this colleague ... he's been with us for twelve years ... and has always done his work to everyone's satisfaction.
NEWSREADER
That was Ms. Damara Gall, head of HR at the Old Bombay Hotel, where José Mendoza was employed as a gardener.

Maggie switches off the radio.

MAGGIE
So the gardener was the murderer.

Nancy remains silent and concentrates on driving resolutely.

MAGGIE
No little Annie. No Wall-E. No E.T.

Nancy keeps quiet and is looking straight ahead.

MAGGIE
Your Voland was wrong ... or, to be fair, let's say: Your Voland isn't quite accurate in making predictions ...
NANCY
He's not my Voland ...
MAGGIE
Listen ... maybe this "Voland" doesn't exist at all ... Yes, I know, yesterday I promised to believe everything ... and I do believe you ... you said yourself that Voland is an illusion ... And that's what I believe! Maybe you ... both of you, you and Grandpa, had a hallucination ... no ... 'cause I heard these voices, too! I got it! You're a medium! Or ... Val is a medium! You hypnotized each other ... that also explains the burn ... hypnosis can also cause injuries ... I've read that somewhere ... that explains everything! 'Cause after all nobody's seen Voland! Just you and Val!
NANCY
And Mike ...
MAGGIE
Mike's dead ...
NANCY
turns to Maggie for the first time Val is dead, too ... He died last night ...

INT. - ROMISH'S OFFICE - DAY

The upper part of an elderly, but attractive and distinguished gray-haired lady wearing plenty of jewellery becomes visible on Romish's screen. It is the honorary consul Anne DE FOUGÉRÉ, *diplomatic representative of the EU and the USA in Arkhangelsk.*

DE FOUGÉRÉ
speaks refined British English with a slight French accent Mr. Bogg-Leach has just been placed in my care ... He is obviously a very sick man ...
ROMISH
He's a boozer and a pill addict! And who are you?
DE FOUGÉRÉ
holds a desk badge in front of the camera. It reads - in English and in Russian - A. De Fougéré, Honorary Consul of the European Union and the United States of America. The badge is flanked on either side by a small US and EU flag, respectively.
Your rude behaviour is beyond me, sir! Mr. Bogg-Leach is mentally sick, but so are you, take my word for it! This is also the reason why the two pilots from the Siberian Helicopter Guards will let your scurrilous insults rest ... I will take care of the repatriation of Mr. Bogg-Leach personally.

ROMISH
beside himself with fury B.L.! You wanker! How much did that badge cost you? Certainly not more than 20 bucks, together with the rocks for the old bag!
DE FOUGÉRÉ
dignified, lecturing Mr. Romish! I had a personal conversation with poor Mr. Bogg-Leach, and I've come to the conclusion that your profound hatred of him stems from sexual jealousy! You ought to be ashamed of yourself! Your secretary could be your daughter! You hypocrite! Bourgeois on the outside, but deep inside a sex freak!
ROMISH
You're on crack, you old slut! I can see that from your eyes!

Meanwhile special agent JOHN SABLE *from the FBI has come in. He bends down to Holly's screen, in this way getting quite close to her.*

JOHN SABLE
talking to the screen Good evening, Consul De Fougéré ... Special Agent John Sable, we talked on the phone earlier ... Thank you for your efforts, I'll get in touch with you later!
ROMISH
Who let you in ... FBI ... may I see your ID? Seems to be genuine ...
JOHN SABLE
Mr. Bogg-Leach got lost in the tundra ... He was only wearing boxer shorts and had wrapped a greenish quilt around himself ... By the way, that quilt belongs to the Old Bombay Hotel in Hollywood ... Consul De Fougéré contacted the FBI because Mr. Bogg-Leach claimed to have been abducted ... Do you know anything about it, Mr. Romish?
ROMISH
Yeah! Bogg-Leach is off his rocker!
JOHN SABLE
Pardon?
ROMISH
Yes! He cracked up!
JOHN SABLE
turns to Holly Why? Do you think so, too, Ms. ... Richardson?
HOLLY
Holly... Well ... actually it is quite strange ... I don't know …

ROMISH
But I know! He couldn't possibly be in the tundra! He's somewhere here in L.A. and has one disgusting idea after the other ... that's the drugs ... and the alcohol ...
JOHN SABLE
Steven Bogg-Leach was found by Italian geologists in Siberia, at a place called Tunguska. It was shortly after 5 p.m. local time, that's 9 a.m. Los Angeles time ...

Holly shrieks

Yes, Holly?

HOLLY
That's totally impossible! I phoned him shortly before nine and put him through to Mr. Romish! He was at the hotel ...

ROMISH
Yes ... He was in the lobby of the Old Bombay ... Together with a ... well ... Russian guest of our company …
JOHN SABLE
He lied!
ROMISH
That's what I'm saying!
JOHN SABLE
Mr. Bogg-Leach wasn't in the lobby at any time ... He never left his hotel room before his ... well ...departure for Tunguska ... That's a proven fact.
ROMISH
Nonsense!
HOLLY
Maybe ... maybe Steve has a twin brother?
JOHN SABLE
shakes his head Holly ... may I ask you to leave Mr. Romish and me alone for a short moment? Thanks ... And don't worry ... Everything will be cleared up ... Maybe all of this is just a stupid misunderstanding ...

Holly leaves the room.

ROMISH
She and Bogg-Leach are having a fling ... his wife and kids are in New York, and he ...
JOHN SABLE
interrupts him This is irrelevant ... Tell me about that Russian ...
ROMISH
Well, the Russian ... what shall I say ... I don't have the faintest idea!
JOHN SABLE
impatient Mr. Bogg-Leach claimed to have been abducted by a Russian ... perhaps by that very same Russian he allegedly was in the hotel-lobby with!
ROMISH
No, impossible ... The Russian in the lobby is Professor Voland ... the agent of a Russian investor ... have a look, read ... I found this e-mail in my incoming mailbox this morning ...
JOHN SABLE
reads "Dear Greg, Steve and myself will meet Voland in the lobby at 8.30 tomorrow, to discuss his presentation. Holly's sent the invitations, about 40 people have confirmed, among them several celebrities. It's important to make a highly professional impression on V. His boss wants to finance our projects. I'm counting on you. See you tomorrow. Good night. M.". Well, then ... What did you think of Voland?
ROMISH
Nothing at all! I've never met him! I didn't even know he existed before I read this e-mail! Holly hadn't heard anything about him, either! The only people who've met him are Bogg-Leach and Mike!
JOHN SABLE
So you also don't know if Mr. Voland owns a cat?
ROMISH
Pardon? Of course not! A cat? Just a moment ... this bastard ... he staged the whole show, I'm telling you! There are enough jobless actors who can imitate cats' voices!

JOHN SABLE
All right ... don't get carried away ... Mr. Bogg-Leach talked about a big fat black cat ... A real cat ... O.K., forget it! Let's recap: Except for two people, of whom one is dead, the other insane and/or 4,000 km away, nobody has seen this Voland …

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The Man Who Wept Too Much (02/12)

INT. - AUTOMOBILE - DAY

Nancy's car comes to a halt. Maggie and Nancy have arrived at the clinic. Maggie has red eyes, she sniffles and blows her nose. Nancy looks at her.

NANCY
whispers I have to tell you something else ... I'm the only one who's seen Voland ... But very soon you'll meet him, too.
MAGGIE
Me?
NANCY
Yes, you ... And not just you ... Also Romish, B.L., and some dozen other people will meet him in ... in … *looks at her watch* about five hours ...

Maggie looks at her questioningly.

NANCY
Shortly after Stravinsky's call Greg phoned ... we're invited ... you and I ... and 40 more people ... mainly technical staff ... a few celebrities will be there, too: actors, actresses, directors, producers ... we're invited to the Fairbanks Building ... at 4 p.m. today ... to a presentation ... given by ... Professor Voland from Moscow …

EXT. - A PARK – DAY

Nancy and Maggie are walking along the footpath towards the entrance of Stravinsky's clinic. On the left and the right side of the path a spacious park stretches out, with trees, hedges, flowers, and ponds spanned by little bridges. A couple of patients are walking around, some have a stiff walk, others are too loose-limbed. A few are sitting on benches. A few are just standing there. Maggie looks around while walking, Nancy is looking straight ahead.

MAGGIE
Who organized the whole thing? Why didn't Mike know anything about it?
NANCY
nervously Don't look at the patients! It might embarrass them ... Well: Holly Richardson, Romish's assistant, supposedly organized it weeks ago! On behalf of Mike and Steve! But Holly can't recall anything! She claims to have read the name Voland for the first time this morning when she checked her incoming mail box! She supposes somebody hacked into her e-mail account and got the whole thing going in her name!

While Maggie and Nancy are walking on and talking, a man in jeans, a T-shirt, and a dressing gown is crawling over one of the little bridges and hiding behind the reeds. It is the Maestro. Carefully he looks in the direction of Maggie and Nancy. His face is covered with sweat, he is wearing his knit cap at an angle. He pulls it over his forehead.

MAESTRO
whispers with tears in his eyes Maggie ... Maggie! Maggie and Nancy ... what are the two doing here? ... Maybe they've come to fetch me? Maybe I'm healed and I just don't know it! And they want to take me with them! But I don't want to! I'm not ready yet!

Maggie and Nancy stop in front of the entrance.

MAGGIE
Can you give me just one reason why Satan … *she lowers her voice when she notices that one of the caregivers is standing in front of the door, quite close to her; he is having a smoking break* why Satan has left hell just in order to make a speech about *Ultimatively innovative technologies in Russian film* in front of a few dozen film professionals?

Nancy lets her eyes wander over the park; finally they dwell on a heavily made-up old woman with reddish-gray hair, who keeps turning like a wheel and making silent movements with her lips. The old woman bears some resemblance to Maggie.

NANCY
Do you know what the first thing was that Voland said? Suddenly I remember. He said: "I am here to end suffering".

INT. - HALL OF DR. STRAVINSKY'S CLINIC - DAY

Maggie and Nancy approach the reception desk. A voice somewhere sings For he's a Jolly Good Fellow. *The refrain is repeated so often that one realizes the text is different.*

VOICE OF A YOUNG MAN
(v.o.), sings
The murderer wasn’t the gardener
The murderer wasn’t the gardener
The murderer wasn’t the gardener
Oh no oh no oh no

The caregiver, who had been standing at the door, comes in. As he hears the song, he laughs and hums the melody briefly. He and Sister Priscilla make eye contact, she smiles and nods, then turns to the two visitors.

SISTER PRISCILLA
Oh, Magg ... Ms. Ryukhin!
MAGGIE
Visibly irritated by the singing, which seems to be getting louder This is my friend Nancy Procopios.

SISTER PRISCILLA
Nice to meet you! You have my deepest sympathy ... Randy, please stop now! It's so horrible! This child ...

The singing stops abruptly.

MAGGIE
Child? My grandpa was ...
SISTER PRISCILLA
Only seven years old! And has the idea to make a parabolic receiving dish out of a big frypan and an electric hedge trimmer, in order to get in touch with Wall-E!
MAGGIE
E.T. ...
SISTER PRISCILLA
Pardon?
MAGGIE
It's E.T. ... Not Wall-E ...
SISTER PRISCILLA
Well, in the news-flash they said ...

Dr. Stravinsky appears in front of his office door, Sister Priscilla stops talking

CAREGIVER
Spooky little Annie ... But that those guys from the forensic medicine went and lost the head almost beats it!

Maggie and Nancy look at each other. Then they walk over to Dr. Stravinsky, who is waiting for them in front of his office's door.

INT. - HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

The Maestro's hospital room, which more or less looks like Ryukhin's. The Maestro is sitting on his bed in his pajamas, Sister Priscilla is standing next to him and preparing a syringe.

SISTER PRISCILLA
Dr. Stravinsky has nothing against a sedative injection, although there's absolutely no need to get excited, Mr. Maestro! We'll take care of you!

The Maestro lies on his bed face down.

MAESTRO
I saw Maggie again after four years ...
SISTER PRISCILLA
interrupts him Yes, but you can stop worrying, she's not here for your sake! Her grandpa died last night ... a pleasant death, actually ... his heart just stopped beating ... it often happens at that age ... 98 years ... a nice age …
MAESTRO
That was Maggie's grandpa in the room next door?
SISTER PRISCILLA
Yeah ... Mr. Valery Ryukhin ... Maggie and a friend are here to keep vigil over him until the body is

fetched ... by his fiancée ...
MAESTRO
turns over and is lying on his back Poor Maggie! She's gonna miss him! But it's better that way: he was totally out of his mind!

Sister Priscilla looks at him questioningly.

MAESTRO
embarrassed Had to be, to be brought here! By the way, her friend is Nancy Procopios!
SISTER PRISCILLA
Do you think I didn't recognize her? I'm a fan of hers ... She's so versatile ... and still so modest ... no airs ... My cousin in New York saw her at the Met! She sang Margot in ...
MAESTRO
interrupts her And her kid? Is it a girl or a boy?
SISTER PRISCILLA
obviously didn't really understand his question In fact ... in her latest film she plays a young boy ... or rather a young man ...

Sister Priscilla has finished her injection. She walks towards the door.

MAESTRO
I meant her kid!
SISTER PRISCILLA
She hasn't got any kids!
MAESTRO
Are you sure, Sister Priscilla? She's married, isn't she? ...
SISTER PRISCILLA
Nope ... divorced twice ... her first husband was this poor devil, by the way ... no kids ...

She stops.

INT. - RYUKHIN'S HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

Dead Ryukhin is lying on a bed. The room is darkened. Two thick candles have been placed on both sides of the end of his bed. He's got a nice hairdo, is wearing an elegant light-colored suit, and has a lilac chrysanthemum in his buttonhole. Maggie is standing beside the bed and looking at Ryukhin. In a corner there are two chairs and a small table, Nancy is sitting on one of the chairs.

MAGGIE
Our parents picked the worst possible moment to die ...
Nancy looks at Maggie and remains silent.

MAGGIE
He was in the heyday of his film career ... rarely had time for us … *she strokes his white hair*... but when he did have time, we had a whole lot of fun with him ... didn't we, Nancy?

Nancy smiles sadly and nods.

MAGGIE
You know what? Suddenly I'm overcome with a feeling of happiness ... no ... it's not quite happiness ... perhaps ... confidence ... no despair any more ... Can you understand that? Here is my dead grandfather, who I have loved, who I'm mourning ... and at the same time I feel like dancing ... dancing! Dancing and being merry! 'Cause I have a kind of feeling telling me I'll soon see Maestro again! Now I know exactly that he isn't dead! I can feel he's close to me!

Nancy glances to the door nervously.

INT. - SMALL OUTER OFFICE - DAY

Romish and Agent Sable are coming out of Romish's office. Holly is sitting at a small desk and eating the second slice of a red pizza which has been cut into six portions.

HOLLY
Shall I order something for you, Greg?
ROMISH
How can I feel like eating when I'm surrounded by lunatics!? I'll see Agent Sable downstairs, and then go and get some fresh air ... Just around the block ... I'll be back in half an hour!
JOHN SABLE
before he disappears behind the door Enjoy your meal, Holly!

Holly smiles coquettishly, with her mouth full. The door closes. Out of thin air a figure appears from behind a filing cabinet. It is a fiery red-haired man with a red six-day-beard. He is dressed all over in a tight, lurid green jersey. From his lower lip a fang sticks out. It is the chief demon AZAZELLO. *The smile on Holly's face is dying. She gulps down her bite. She scrutinizes the stranger from head to toe.*

HOLLY
How ... where the hell ... the ... the gym is on the floor below!

Azazello approaches the desk.

AZAZELLO
points at the pizza, speaks through his nose with an Italian accent
What on Earth is this? So beautifully red! I'm hungry!

INT. - HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

MAGGIE
Is it Voland, Nancy? Is it Satan's presence in this city? He's giving me hope, he's turning your head! Is the devil really so undevilish, Nancy?

INT. - SMALL OUTER OFFICE - DAY

Without looking away from Azazello, Holly presses a button on one side of her desk with her foot.

AZAZELLO
If you don't share your red stuff with me immediately, I'll ring out the news that you've been embezzling money here for years!
HOLLY
stammers in a childlike voice You ... you're crazy ... but, please ... help yourself ...
AZAZELLO
takes one slice of pizza I've changed my mind! I also want the fancy restaurant in Montpelier, Vermont, which you furnished with the embezzled money; that restaurant managed by your ex-sister-in-law and secret lover!

Holly is staring at Azazello as if she was hypnotized. The latter slowly bends down to her with his slice of pizza.

AZAZELLO
I've changed my mind again! For you have such a beautiful neck ... I'll be satisfied with the red stuff after all!

Azazello's face approaches Holly's face. Then, like lightning, he rips open Holly's neck with his fang. He holds the slice of pizza in such a way that it is soaked by her stream of blood. Since more blood is spurting out, he takes a second and a third slice. He does it so skilfully that not a single drop of blood is spilt beside the pizza. He puts the three slices together and devours this supersize sandwich with obvious enjoyment. He puts the last piece of pizza in his breast pocket like a handkerchief.

INT. - THE MAESTRO'S HOSPITAL ROOM

MAESTRO
turns over to lie on his back, sits up halfway Why poor devil ... What do you mean by poor devil?
SISTER PRISCILLA
Well ... er ... I forgot that you never watch TV, and you also don't surf the Internet ... no tablet … no smartphone … and this is good for you! A terrible story ... I'm gonna tell it to you another time ... now you're too ...
MAESTRO
interrupts her excitedly No, now! Right away!
SISTER PRISCILLA
Only if you promise to relax!

The Maestro leans back again

There's a good boy! Well ... this director ... this Berlioz, Nancy's ex-husband, had a ... how shall I put it ... a horrible accident yesterday! It's hard to believe ...

MAESTRO
interrupts her And the head? His head?
SISTER PRISCILLA
Has disappeared! So you do hide a tablet somewhere, Mr. Maestro?!

INT. - RYUKHIN'S HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

Nancy puts on several layers of a dark-red lipstick. Maggie, who is sitting next to her, is watching her from the side in astonishment.

NANCY
He said I look like Joan Crawford in her later films ...

She rummages about in a make-up bag, which is lying on her lap, and takes out several hair clips. She puts up her hair.

MAGGIE
Joan Crawford was a beautiful woman ...
NANCY
interrupts her In her later films!
MAGGIE
She was also beautiful in her mature years! She had no dollface, she had distinctive features! These clear-cut features ...
NANCY
It wasn't meant as a compliment ...
MAGGIE
How do you know?

INT. - THE MAESTRO'S HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

Sister Priscilla disappears behind the door. A key turns in the lock.

MAESTRO
turns to the side, whispers with tears in his eyes, sobbing Nancy ... forgive me! Val ... forgive me ... Val ... Nancy ... forgive me ... What have I done ... it's my fault ... why didn't I ...

EXT. - SIX-LANE FREEWAY – DAY

FLASHBACK
The Maestro is walking unsteadily along a freeway. He is unshaven, his clothes are dirty. Beside the freeway there is a huge car dump. Suddenly he stops short. He has noticed Nancy, who is approaching in a white, open Volkswagen Beetle Cabriolet. Suddenly he turns his head. Through this movement the glittering "M" on his knit cap reflects the sunlight. For a fraction of a second this creates a small flash of light in the rearview mirror and Nancy is momentarily blinded by it. She spots him.

The caption 2014 appears at the bottom of the screen.

NANCY
The Maestro! Hey! Hey, stop!

EXT. - AROUND AND IN THE CAR DUMP - DAY

The Maestro enters the car dump and isn't visible for Nancy any more. He can see her, though, since he is hiding behind some wrecked cars and watching her. Nancy stops her car on the emergency lane and risks her life crossing the highly frequented freeway. She enters the car dump and sees the Maestro running away from her. She runs after him. She shouts something after him that is hardly understandable because of the car noises.

NANCY
… for weeks ... stop ... running away from me? ... please ...small bump … water ...

The Maestro begins to climb over the stacked autowracks. He cries. Nancy climbs after him, but stops at a certain point because she loses a shoe and injures her hand on a sharp sheet metal edge. The Maestro stands high above her, out of reach.

NANCY
... innocuous ... just water!
MAESTRO
drowned in tears … misery ... illness … all gone!
NANCY
Why … actually … nothing happened ...
MAESTRO
intelligible by lip-reading Gone!
NANCY
... mineral water … simulating … water ...
MAESTRO
intelligible by lip-reading Gone!
NANCY
... fit and well ... Maggie … so much ... Eisenstein’s Troubles...

EXT. SIDEWALK - DAY

FLASHBACK WITHIN THE FLASHBACK
The caption 2013 appears at the bottom of the screen.

The Maestro, dressed like in the previous scene, but not shabby yet, throws an object into a waste container while passing it. After he has walked on a little, a huge black cat jumps out of the container, miaowing loudly. It has a USB stick in its mouth.

END OF THE FLASHBACK WITHIN THE FLASHBACK

EXT. - AROUND AND IN THE CAR DUMP - DAY

MAESTRO
as above Gone!
NANCY
... ... Dr. Stravinsky ...

He shakes his head quickly and defiantly.

NANCY
in a low voice Why are you doing this to Maggie ...

MAESTRO
in a low voice Gone! Everything's gone!

Limping, Nancy is about to cross the highway to get back to her car. She notices that it has vanished.

NANCY
Oh no! That's the limit!

END OF FLASHBACK

INT. - RYUKHIN'S HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

Maggie and Nancy are sitting next to each other, looking at each other.

NANCY
He's a mocker, Maggie!
MAGGIE
Eisenstein was a mocker, too!
NANCY
Eisenstein was a human!
MAGGIE
obviously didn't hear her, she is looking straight ahead now Eisenstein was mocking the elderly Pirandello and his velvet vest ...
NANCY
He translated his family name as "fiery angel" ... the old guy was flattered ... This is from the episode *Eisenstein in Berlin*, isn't it?
MAGGIE
Yep! Eisenstein was young then, and he admired the aging Italian poet ...
NANCY
But 20 years later ...
MAGGIE
20 years later ... Pirandello had been long dead ... Eisenstein mocked him ruthlessly! But during the night before he died, he dreamed of the vest, Pirandello's beautiful, velvety soft vest ... and he put it on ... it was much too tight for him, though - because Eisenstein had become fat ... Pirandello's vest nearly strangled his sick heart, his sick, burning heart ... and then it caught fire! And it felt good!
NANCY
fidgety You and the Maestro have thought up the story of that dream, it is from *The Dollar Princess* ... and I can't understand, even if I tried, what all of this has to do with Voland!

Abruptly Maggie turns to Nancy.

MAGGIE
Voland loves and admires you, still he plays cynical because he is sick and tired ...
NANCY
interrupts her What makes you think so ... Voland ... is ... no ... human! He isn't a man, he isn't a

woman, he isn't a child! Voland ... is ... the ... devil! The devil doesn't love ... the devil doesn't hate ... The devil merely plays his role!

INT. - THE MAESTRO'S HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

The Maestro wakes up with a muffled cry.

MAESTRO
I promised you, Nancy! And I'll keep my promise!

Weeping he gets up and hides under the bed.

INT. - RYUKHIN'S HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

Maggie stands up in order to chase away a fly which has settled down on Ryukhin's cheek.

MAGGIE
I might as well ask you: How do you know what the devil is like? Have you ever met him?
NANCY
Yeah, yesterday ...

The persistent fly lands on Ryukhin's forehead. Maggie chases it away.The fly lands on the corner of Ryukhin's mouth. Maggie chases it away and walks around in the room, trying to catch it.

MAGGIE
slightly unnerved because she doesn't get the fly Let's leave it ... I don't believe in the devil anyway ... but I believe in Voland ... I guess he'll guide me to Maestro ...

Nancy stands up and takes Maggie's hand. Now both are standing beside Ryukhin's bed. Nancy is looking at the dead body full of sadness.

NANCY
Val also saw him yesterday ... and now he's dead!
MAGGIE
He was 98 years old ...
NANCY
He was completely healthy and vigorous, Maggie! He was going to marry next month! Now Amberson doesn't even have the consolation of being his widow!

Maggie looks at her friend from the side in astonishment. A buzzing makes her turn to the body. The fly is crawling on Ryukhin's eyelid towards the corner of his eye. Nancy moves her free hand close to Ryukhin's face, and the fly lands on her hand, in the wrinkle between her thumb and her index finger.Nancy goes to the balcony door, opens it, raises her hand, and the insect flies away. She closes the balcony door again.

INT. - UNDERGROUND PARKING GARAGE - DAY

Special Agent Sable sits in his car and smokes. He is deeply engrossed in the display of his tablet. Then he makes a phone call.

JOHN SABLE
listening to what seems to be a voice on the other end of the line But the only person who can irrefutably testify that Bogg-Leach was actually abducted by aliens is this Italian geologist.
The display shows an exceptionally beautiful woman in her late thirties; Sable slowly scrolls through the display, several photos of the woman are visible, exclusively such ones that show her coming out of the shower naked or half-naked, or sleeping alone in bed.

No, Sir, that's not a good solution... if anything were to happen to her, suspicion would arise even more... I have a much better idea... we spread the rumor that the woman is crazy! I mean, she has an IQ of 157! And a great figure... The woman is single! Absolutely no sex in her life! That's why she has been watched day and night by two Italian secret agents, unofficially needless to say ... in their free time... They haven't found anything ... her abstinence is highly suspicious ...This candy doll actually only lives for petrology... Legs like a gazelle... 100 percent celibate! A wretched waste... Everyone will readily believe it… that she's nuts... with those tits! All natural, zero silicone, I know what I'm talking about… Certain media will enjoy reporting that she's involved with radioactive stones… and then she ends up in the booby hatch... there she rambles... naturally... they put her in a straitjacket... with a deep neckline… hahahahahaha...

While laughing lewdly and maliciously, Sable catches sight of Holly approaching his car with a smile. He sees only her head, the rest of her body is hidden by cars.

JOHN SABLE
I'll call you back in a couple of minutes!

He opens the window on the passenger's side. When Holly comes closer, he notices that she is stark naked.

JOHN SABLE
What the hell ...

Quickly he wants to close the window, but Holly is faster. She slides one hand through the small slit that is still open and blocks the closing device. Her face approaches the window. A wide open wound on her neck becomes visible. Sable's cigarette falls from his hand onto his lap; it starts eating its way through the cloth, giving off smoke. Holly worms her way through the narrow slit in the window and sits down on the passenger's seat. She fixes her dead eyes on the smoke coming from Sable's crotch.

HOLLY
hoarsely whispering That's the way I like men ... fiery!

She gets the cigarette from Sable's lap (in his fly there is a gaping hole where the cigarette has burned the cloth) and sticks it between her lips lasciviously. She sucks on it several times. Small clouds of smoke come out of her neck wound. Trembling and whimpering Sable watches her movements. Holly extinguishes the cigarette on her own breast. Slowly her face approaches Sable's

face. He tries to get out of her way.

JOHN SABLE
in a childlike voice I'm scared!
HOLLY
keeps coming closer Johnny-Baby ... needn't be scared ... Holly's here! Holly wants peck from Johnny!
JOHN SABLE
But ... Johnny ... doesn't want ... no peck ... from Holly ...

The back of Sable's head hits the window pane. He cannot go back any further. Holly embraces his neck and bites it with pleasure.

INT. – SMALL OUTER OFFICE - DAY

Romish comes in.

ROMISH
Holly! I gotta find this Voland! Let's try at the Russian emb...

Holly is not there. Romish notices the empty pizza box on the desk. When he walks on towards his office, he sees that ladies' underwear and clothes are lying scattered on the floor.

That's the limit! They're screwing! This FBI agent seems to think he's in a sitcom ...

He knocks loudly on his office door.

yelling Mr. Sable! Open up immediately! And I'll report this incident to your captain, you can count on that!

He waits and listens for a few seconds. When nothing happens, he knocks again and then wants to rattle at the door. Since it isn't locked, it opens and Romish lands abruptly on his behind. Sitting on the floor, he thinks for a moment, then he gathers Holly's clothes reluctantly, and throws them through the open door into his office.

Get dressed! And then get the hell out o' here!

Romish perceives nothing but complete silence. He peers around his office; it is empty. Cautiously, he looks under Holly's desk and behind the filing cabinets.

INT. RESTROOM WITH TOILET

Loaded with Holly's clothes, Romish enters the ladies' restroom. A chubby, Latin-American looking 12-year-old girl, is washing her hands and looks at him in amazement. All toilets but the last one are unoccupied. The noise of the flush can be heard. Romish rattles the door.

ROMISH
You ought to be ashamed of yourself! How can anyone be so horny! The FBI ...

Owing to the rattling the toilet door flings open, a chubby middle-aged Latina comes out. Scared as hell she dashes to the girl, who hides behind her. Both are staring at the heap of clothes that Romish is carrying. On top there is a red lace tanga. Romish follows her gaze. When he sees the tanga, he shudders.

LADY IN THE RESTROOM
If you want, I'll put that on ...*she points at the tanga* but please, don't do anything to my daughter ... she's still a child ...

After a few seconds of complete silence and gazing at each other the three flee from the restroom at the same time, so there is a jam at the door because each of them wants to get out first.

INT. RYUKHIN'S HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

Maggie and Nancy sit down. Maggie takes Nancy's hand.

MAGGIE
Your divorce ... I often wondered ... it came so suddenly … you just said ...

FLASHBACK

EXT./INT. IN AND IN FRONT OF NANCY'S AND MAGGIE'S HOUSE – DAY

Nancy is standing in the entrance door, On either side of her there is a huge suitcase on wheels. Maggie is standing in the middle of the hall, looking at Nancy questioningly.

The caption 2014 appears at the bottom of the screen.

NANCY
with a broad grin D.I.V.O.R.C.E.!
MAGGIE
What? What ... What happened? Why ... so suddenly ...
NANCY
The classic reason: he doesn't love me!

END OF FLASHBACK

INT. RYUKHIN'S HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

MAGGIE
... that he doesn't love you ... you had planned a baby ... this sudden divorce ... has something to do with Maestro ... doesn't it, Nancy? ... now I know ... with Maestro and ... with Voland!

The two friends put their arms on the little table and hold each other by the hands. They look at each other.

FLASHBACK

EXT. A STREET - NIGHT

Nancy and her husband FLYNN *are walking side by side and chatting. They laugh.*

FLYNN
And when is that supposed to be, did the famous gynecologist say?
NANCY
Well ... from midnight until the early hours of the morning ... just about that ...

Nancy stops. Flynn takes a few more steps, then he also stops. Nancy goes to him and hugs him. They kiss in the middle of the sidewalk.

FLYNN
Shouldn't we hurry then? It'll soon be midnight! These capricious egg cells ... we're wasting precious time here ...
NANCY
I don't believe we're wasting time here ... quite the contrary ...

They are holding each other tight and exchange passionate kisses. On the hand with which Nancy is stroking her husband's back a big blowfly lands. Nancy tries to chase it away by moving her hand quickly, but the fly keeps coming back. This distracts Nancy from kissing. She opens her eyes and notices something glitter on the ground. Quickly she detaches herself from her husband's embrace and picks up an object from the ground: it is a tiny star, glimmering like silver. She only now notices that a narrow, dark passage opens between two dilapidated houses before her. She takes a few steps into it.

FLYNN
What are you doing? Where are you going? *points at the object in Nancy's hand* What's that?
NANCY
walks on faster, flies are buzzing all around her Nothing! I just gotta ... it's urgent ...
FLYNN
Can't you hold it back? We'll be home in a few minutes! Do you feel sick? I'll certainly not let you walk on alone here! And that stench ... I'm sure there's a carcass somewhere around here ...
NANCY
stops and turns around to him Flynn, please! Wait here! Just a minute! I promise I'll be back in a minute ...

She starts running. There are more and more flies. Behind Nancy Flynn becomes visible, he has followed her.

FLYNN
sarcastic, holding a paper tissue to his nose Why hurry ... whatever you're looking for here, it won't run away! It's dead, it's been rotting for a long time!
NANCY
Flynn! D'you love me? If you love me, you'll go back and wait for me! Don't follow me! Trust me!

She runs faster and faster, while huge swarms of buzzing blowflies accompany her and precede her. Suddenly, she stops, turns around, and knocks Flynn, who has been chasing her, to the ground with

a powerful uppercut. For a second, she stares at him as he lies motionless on the ground, then she continues running.

Half hidden behind a trash can, leaning against the house wall, a human body becomes visible. It is the Maestro's body, in an advanced state of decomposition. Only sparse, dirty rags remain of the clothing. The knitted hat with the glued-on 'M' is crooked. Insects crawl out of his empty eye sockets. His chin is smeared with a darkish paste. His cheeks are hollow and gray to dark purple. His abdomen has burst open, and a miscolored liquid has flowed out of the opening. His right arm is bare, and it is evident that the upper arm has been eaten down to the bone. His legs are visible beneath the torn jeans, with large parts of the flesh eaten away from the thighs and calves. Wet green spots and yellow puddles appear at several body locations, swarming with maggots. Nancy looks at him. She holds both hands over her mouth and nose.

MAGGIE
(v.o.) low All these people who have been long dead and have mostly been forgotten, he makes them alive again! To each and every one, he returns their own unique life melody! He is the Maestro, Nancy! Like notes on a score … they live … they all live … He can bring everyone back … everyone back … He can bring everyone ... back … back … everyone ... He can bring everyone back … *in a fading and faraway voice* everyone … everyone ... everyone ... everyone ... everyone ...

Nancy looks at the tiny silvery star in her hands. Her face becomes more and more sorrowful. She squats next to the corpse and adjusts his cap who is completely askew. She takes a long look at the decayed head of the Maestro.

MAGGIE
(v.o.) loud and cheerful voice Today I met the man of my life!
NANCY
(v.o.) Tell me!

Nancy sits down on the ground and puts the Maestro's corpse on her lap. The upper part of his body is leaning against an object, maybe a big jar or a trash can. Nancy has a look at the bluish deep cuts on the body's wrists, in which ant trails have formed.

MAGGIE
(v.o.) fast, in a breathlessly whispering voice E.: You're dancing superbly, Gloria! G.: You too, Sergey. E.: But I don't have so beautiful eyes as you, Gloria! Your eyes are radiant like ... like ... well, like Gloria van der Hael's eyes! G.: Thank you, Sergey. E.: This stupid veil is sticking to your face, Gloria! Couldn't you take it off at last? Yes ... Yes! You're extremely beautiful, Gloria! And now smile, Gloria, smile at me, please! Come on! G.: That's impossible, Sergey. S. slips off one of his bright red braces. G.: I beg you, please, Sergey! Those red braces with your tuxedo are already indecent enough! My mother ... E.: If you don't smile immediately, Gloria, I'll slip off my second one! I'm warning you: my underpants are printed with a pattern of stars and stripes! A present from Charles Spencer Chaplin! G. bursts into a laughter which is as clear as a bell. E.: Your teeth are remarkably ugly, Gloria! So blackish and crooked, and in addition, there are a few gaps between them! Oh Gloria, I love your teeth! They're saving my life! Because if you also had beautiful teeth, I'd throw myself onto the floor like a little dog, and I'd sit up on my hind legs so that you'd fondle my belly ... Gloria ... and my heart ... oh Gloria ... my heart would burn on the spot! G.: You're a big child, Sergey. E.: I am Monsieur Madame et Bébé in one person ... Gloria! How d'you like that, Nancy? I wrote this scene! All alone! The Maestro says it's brilliant ... What do you think, Nancy ...

Nancy groans in agony. She takes the Maestro's hand, which is clenched to a fist, but partly like a skeleton, between her hands and opens it: there is a large number of ants in it. Nancy breaks into tears. When she strokes the hand, two fingers come off and remain on her palm. Now Nancy sobs and cries like a little child, breathlessly, with her mouth open, so that some snot gets in. Inarticulately, with a childlike voice, she shouts for Mommy and Daddy.

MAESTRO
(v.o.) quietly Nancy!

Nancy cries even louder and shakes her head. Like a little child she hides her eyes with her arm and screams out an inarticulate "No!" in a childlike voice.

MAESTRO
(v.o.) a little louder Nancy!

Abruptly Nancy stops crying.

(v.o.) even louder Nancy! Most faithful of all friends!

Nancy turns to him. The Maestro is now a living human being. His body shows no signs of decomposition anymore. Horrified, Nancy shakes off his body, stands up, and takes a few steps back without averting her eyes from him. She stumbles over the lid of a trash can, but she manages not to fall. The lid rolls away with a tinny noise. She walks further back, away from the Maestro. The latter slowly stretches out his arm after her. Flabbergasted she stares at him.

MAESTRO
in a low, feeble voice Nancy ... don't go away ...

Without taking her eyes off him, Nancy leans forward slightly and vomits. Then she runs away.The vomit sticks to her chin and her clothes, which were soiled with the corpse's juices all over anyway.

MAESTRO
v.o. Don't leave me alone ... please ...

Nancy stops and slowly returns to the Maestro. She stops a few steps away from him.

MAESTRO
I'm cold ...

Nancy hesitates, then she squats in front of him. She notices that the cuts on the wrists have disappeared.

I fell asleep here, and now I'm cold ...

Nancy stands up and takes off her jacket. It is a light-weight, slim-fit jacket, which is naturally badly soiled. Nancy takes off her red turtleneck sweater (under it she is wearing a black silk strappy top), squats in front of the Maestro again, and pulls the sweater over him.

Nancy ...

His cap has slipped because of the pulling over, Nancy straightens it. Then she stands up and puts on her dirty jacket.

Thanks ... Nancy ...

With every "Nancy", her face hardens a bit more.

NANCY
As I told you one year ago, Stravinsky's clinic is one of the best in the city! And you'll stay there until you're completely sane! And Maggie must never learn about this! Do you understand? Never! I'm not gonna let Maggie know ... what has just happened here ... you know what I mean …
MAESTRO
weeping Yes, I know ... no ... I know nothing ... I'm sick ...!

END OF FLASHBACK

INT. THE MAESTRO'S HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

The Maestro is lying doubled up under his bed. From outside somebody tries to open the door, which is locked. Rattling at it is heard. The Maestro winces and listens. Then he shoves from under his bed and walks towards a closet. He is crying.

INT. RYUKHIN'S HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

MAGGIE
What was that? Somebody rattled at the door of the next room! Are patients locked in here?

Nancy is frightened and shakes her head. At that moment the door opens.

SISTER PRISCILLA
(v.o.) You got the wrong door, madam! It's here!

Maggie jumps up and looks at the door. AMBERSON, *a beautiful elderly lady, enters. She is dressed in elegant black, her silver hair is carefully styled, she wears a simple yet tasteful hat with a net veil.*

MAGGIE
Abbie ... oh Abbie!

AMBERSON
(v.o.) weeping Maggie! Nancy!

Maggie, Nancy, and Amberson fall into each other's arms.

INT. THE MAESTRO'S HOSPITAL ROOM – DAY

The Maestro steps into the closet. When he squats in it, he shuts the door from the inside. From the closet, it cries out loudly.

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The King Of Dramedy (03/12)

EXT. FAIRBANKS BUILDING - DAY

The white, smooth front view of the Fairbanks building. On the top floor, the facade and the hinted-at domed roof are made of glass.

INT. CONFERENCE HALL - DAY

In a small conference hall about a dozen tables are standing. At the tables between one and three people each are sitting. Some are having conversations, some look at their watches expectantly, have a look around, and eat and drink from time to time. It is a predominantly male audience. A waitress walks around, serving small snacks and drinks. The ceiling and facade-side wall of the conference hall are made of glass. The view implies that the hall is in a skyscraper. On the side opposite the glass wall there are two doors, one at the front, near the stage and one at the back. In the middle of the stage a speaker's desk is standing. Romish walks from one table to the other, exchanging a few words with the people. He is trying to appear laid-back, but does not quite succeed, mainly because he keeps looking at his watch. He sees Maggie and Nancy, who apparently have just entered and are standing at the back. Nancy is wearing large sunglasses and a broad-brimmed hat. She puts her index finger on her lips to suggest that she does not want to be noticed. Romish takes the hint, keeps a poker face, and slowly walks over to the two. Nancy takes off her glasses and hat.

ROMISH
At last! Nancy ... Rita! Why incognito? Oh, I understand! Poor Mike! And in addition Val Ryukhin's had it! Yasmine just broke the bad news! My heartfelt sympathy, Rita! (turns briefly to Nancy) Sincere condolences to both of you! But please, take a seat!

It is noticeable that Romish feels sympathy or even a certain (fatherly?) affection for Maggie. Despite his tension he is really glad to see her. In a corner, there are armchairs stacked, he fetches three chairs, Nancy helps him set them up.

I haven't seen you for ages ... Rita ... you're looking good!

This is not a set phrase, since Maggie , after the last scene, is looking about five years younger. Her cheeks are rosy, her lively eyes are gleaming merrily and roguish, her hairdo is beautiful.

The same can't be said about you, Nancy ...

This is also true. Her mouth, made up in dark red, the thick layer of mascara and the slightly peculiar put-up hair offset the paleness of Nancy's cheeks and her tense features.

MAGGIE
And not about you, either, Greg ...
ROMISH
Since this morning all hell has broken loose! ... This is far too much for me … *He is about to inform Maggie and Nancy about the strange happenings of the last few hours, but thinks better of it.* I'm quite numerate, but keeping these people in a good mood, goes beyond ...
NANCY
interrupts him Well, it's not your job! Where is B.L.? And your assistant?
MAGGIE
in high spirits Poor you! But Holly's got the know-how! She and B.L. are the flacks! Where is Holly by the way?
NANCY
Keeping people happy with food and drinks is a good idea ... so, where's B.L.?
MAGGIE
Is she at the restroom?
NANCY
Where's B.L.? Last night he was unable to come, so they said, but today? So, where is he?
ROMISH
B.L.? D'you mean Bogg-Leach? Yeah? Well ... Bogg-Leach ... B.L. ... Steven ... Bogg-Leach ... is ... sick! *upset, to Maggie* No! She's not at the restroom! How d'you get the idea?

Romish's answer and tone are so peculiar that Nancy and Maggie stare at him, bewildered. There is a short pause.

Holly’s ... unwell!

MAGGIE
B.L. is sick and Holly's unwell! Is this the family version of: Last night the two fucked their brains out and are still in a coma?
ROMISH
Of course not! Well ... why not? Yeah, that's the way it is! The two ... you know ...
NANCY
Greg ... are you sick?
Romish
Me? Sick? No! I am not sick!
NANCY
B.L. and Holly have disappeared, haven't they?
ROMISH
bursting out Sable isn't available, either! B.L. is gone with the hotel quilt ... Holly has partly disappeared ...
NANCY
Who's Sable?
MAGGIE
Oh! By partly d'you mean in bits and pieces?
ROMISH
Rita! Please! No! Her clothes are still there ... Her handbag with its contents including her cell are also there ... Her underwear ... too! Whereas Bogg-Leach at least took his underpants and that

quilt ...
NANCY
interrupts him We don't really wanna know ... who is Sable?
MAGGIE
Now I understand ... You needn't be scared! Everything will be just fine!
winks at Nancy like at an accomplice He's a mocker!
ROMISH
Special Agent John Sable from the FBI! He was supposed to investigate B.L.'s alleged kidnapping! I've been trying to reach him on the phone for hours, but he doesn't answer! D'you wanna try, Rita?
MAGGIE
holds Romish's cell phone to her ear

INT. CAR TRUNK

Holly, with her mouth blood-smeared, and Sable, with a bloody bite on his neck, are lying in the trunk like sardines in a can. Both are sleeping and snoring softly. A cell phone rings. Sable moans and puts one hand in the pocket of his jacket. The ringing stops.

INT. CONFERENCE HALL – DAY

MAGGIE
*holds the cell phone to her ear and listens.*I can hear something ... sounds like snoring ...

She hands Nancy the cell phone; Nancy shakes her head. Maggie gives the phone back to Romish. The latter listens.

ROMISH
Yeah ... really ... two kinds of snoring ... It's an epidemic, I'm telling you ... a virus ... But I'm immune ... Thank God!
MAGGIE
God has nothing to do with it! Quite the contrary!
NANCY
What epidemic?
ROMISH
All around me people are going crazy! Gaga! And then they vanish for good ... Down the drain! First B.L. gets it! Pinches the hotel quilt ... hires this old slut, who plays a posh aristocrat! Yuck! And Holly is wandering about somewhere in this building, stark naked ... without her cell phone ...
MAGGIE
whispering to Nancy Holy hell! His jabbering sounds like Val last night!
NANCY
Greg, calm down …
ROMISH
I am to calm down! A dangerous virus is spreading! I'm afraid this Russian, Voland, has brought it in ...
NANCY
interrupts him in a sharp tone Voland isn't Nosferatu!
MAGGIE
imitates Nancy's tone Exactly! How dare you, Greg!

ROMISH
That wasn't my point ... Nosferatu ... yuck … *looks at his watch, relieved* anyway ... he's late ... he should have been here half an hour ago ... he's not coming! He's probably on his way back to Russia ... Oh, I remember: Sable mentioned a cat ... maybe the virus comes from the cat? A rabid cat ...
NANCY
interrupts him, worried Cut it out, please!
MAGGIE
Oh yes! The cat! The cat! The cat!

At this very moment a huge black cat appears in front of the glass wall, and with a powerful leap lands in the middle of the hall. Some amazed "ahs" and "ohs" come from the audience, and also several cries and female screaming. Hippo, the cat, remains standing on its hind legs. Only his head is slowly moving. He is scrutinizing the audience. Nancy leaves the hall through the back door. Maggie and Romish hardly notice this, they are staring at Hippo as if they were hypnotized.

MAN FROM THE AUDIENCE #1
How did that thing get through the glass?
MAN FROM THE AUDIENCE #2
Maybe ... maybe this isn't a real cat at all ... but ... a hologram ...

Hippo looks dourly at the man and hisses at him quietly.

MINNIE
Are you blind? Don't you see that the window's open?
MAN FROM THE AUDIENCE #3
I'm much more interested in ... look ... that car ... look ...

A dark-green vintage limousine "parks" outside, in front of the glass wall. The people in the hall are craning their necks, some stand up in order to see better. Most faces express utter amazement, others curiosity. On a few faces one can see sheer anguish.

MINNIE
Big deal! This is a helicopter, covered by an old automobile bodywork!
MAN FROM THE AUDIENCE #1
quietly Well ... there <u>is</u> glass! I can see the reflections of the light!

WOMAN FROM THE AUDIENCE #2
Are you crazy? Oh ... look ... a clown!

Bassoon steps down from the window into the hall.

MAN FROM THE AUDIENCE #2
Yes, of course! This agent, this Professor Valdemar, is Russian, isn't he!
MINNIE
So what? Don't you know that the heyday of the Russian clowns is over?
MAN FROM THE AUDIENCE #1
in a low voice I believe his name's Voland ...
MINNIE
answers back Well, stop being so self-important!

Next Azazello enters the hall. He stops close to the window. Hippo leaves his place in the middle of the hall and moves next to Bassoon. A lot of spectators are sitting with their mouth open because of Azazello's weird look. But nobody has the time to make a comment, because a large shadow darkens the hall. It is Voland. On entering the hall he leans heavily on Azazello's arm. Respectfully Bassoon and Hippo have formed a guard of honor. Voland limps slightly and leans on Azazellos shoulder while walking. Hypnotized Maggie follows each of his movements. She turns to the side in order to say something to Nancy, and notices that she is not there. A woman from the audience is looking hard at the window. Obviously she is looking for the dark-green limousine, which has vanished. As Bassoon is passing her table, he opens his hand. He shows the woman a miniature model of the limousine. The woman moves back and screams.

BASSOON
Funny! The Hollywoodians are afraid of toy cars!

Voland is wearing a dark-gray suit, a black shirt, and a dark-red tie. His face only becomes fully visible when he is standing on the platform behind the lectern. He wears a stiff black face mask that extends to the chin. Behind the one eye opening there is blackness, behind the other a bright green reptile's eye. Voland and the audience look at each other silently for a few seconds. Azazello is standing sideways behind him. Hippo (on his hind legs) and Bassoon are standing next to each other at the front of the platform. Romish rushes forward. When he wants to step onto the platform, Hippo turns his head towards him.

HIPPO
hissing hoarsely Lay off, bookkeeper! You're not needed here! If you take one more step, I'll infect you with rabies!

Shocked, Romish withdraws to his seat.

MAN FROM THE AUDIENCE #1
Oh my Gawd ...
WOMAN FROM THE AUDIENCE #2
This is too scary for me! I'm leaving!
MAN FROM THE AUDIENCE #4
Those Russkies!
WOMAN FROM THE AUDIENCE #4
What Russkies? Where are Russians?
MINNIE
Good morning! Prof. Voldemort is Russian! It says so on the invitation!
FREDDIE
Hahahaha, Minnie! Voldemort! Minnie ... hey ... You're in the wrong movie!
MAN FROM THE AUDIENCE #2
Waldemar! His name's Waldemar! There are lots of Russians with German-sounding names ...
MINNIE
Stop calling me Minnie, Freddie!
WOMAN FROM THE AUDIENCE #2
I happen to know that Wallander is a Swedish name, but he's scary anyway ...
FREDDIE
Oh, sorry ... Yasmine! Y-a-s-m-iiiiii-n-e!

MAN FROM THE AUDIENCE #1
*quietly, h*e *points to the display of his tablet to the neighbouring table* Voland, his name's Voland ...
MINNIE
casts a fleeting glance at the display In that case he's French, and it's pronounced Volàng!
FREDDIE
No doubt he's Russian! Only Russians would get involved in such a masquerade! They're still stuck in the Rococo period!
MINNIE
We know you're an academic, Freddie! So just shut up!

At a table a man, a woman, and a 13-year-old girl, who is obviously their daughter, are sitting.

MOTHER
What the hell's the matter with his eyes? I can't even look! It's disgusting!
FATHER
Yeah! Real scary!
TEENAGE GIRL
Mom! Dad! It's make-up! A gag! So not cool ...
HIPPO
squirming; in a screeching voice Sire! I have a cramp in my left paw! No, in my right one! No, my left one! I badly need some loosening-up exercises! May I?
FATHER
Oh! The clown is a ventriloquist!
MINNIE
Quiet!

Voland nods. Hippo starts leaping through the whole hall. His somersaults go up to the glass ceiling and leave red trails of light, which have the form of arabesques or grids and fade slowly. After a while he dissolves into thin air.

INT. RESTROOM

Nancy is standing in front of the mirror and wiping the make-up from her face with paper napkins. Her hair is not put-up any longer, but tied to a plain pony-tail.

INT. CONFERENCE HALL - DAY

On the platform Hippo, as a short, chubby man, is standing beside Bassoon.

VOLAND
Well, Cavaliere, this is no audience that wants to amuse itself, like in Moscow in the good old days, right?

Voland has turned his head slightly towards Azazello, who nods almost imperceptively. Voland leans on the lectern heavily with both arms. He makes eye contact with Maggie and adopts a slightly more upright posture. His green eye lingers on the empty spot next to Maggie and then looks towards the door.

MAGGIE
whispering to Romish He's looking for Nancy! Where is she?

Romish shrugs his shoulders. One can see that he has totally different worries.

FREDDIE
in a low voice Shit! Where's the cat???

Woman #3 stands up. She is a bit shaky. From this and from her face one can tell that she is tipsy. The man sitting at the same table looks at her questioningly.

WOMAN FROM THE AUDIENCE #3
I urgently need to go to the restroom!

She takes a step and bounces back, as if from a wall. She tries again, same result. Without success she tries to remove the invisible obstacle bouncing against it with her left, then her right shoulder. She leaps into the air with a step of her left foot, then her right. Her companion is watching her ironically.

MAN FROM THE AUDIENCE #7
You're legless again, Tiff! D'you need help?
WOMAN FROM THE AUDIENCE #3
defiant, sits down again No! It's not urgent any more!
VOLAND
declaiming, as if he were reciting a poem No, this audience consists of specially qualified, highly specialized gentlemen and ladies!

Slowly he scrutinizes the audience, but his look dwells on the empty place between Maggie and Romish again and again. Well ... let me see ... who have we got here ... We have... some sound technicians... and… *looks at Maggie* ...a wannabe sound technician… *looks back at the audience* a few cameramen, three cutters, two directors, five assistant directors... a producer... and... *looks at Maggie* a wannabe production assistant… a stuntman... then...a bunch of special effects specialists and computer experts... and… *looks at Maggie again* a wannabe computer expert...

With each "wannabe..." some in the audience follow Voland's gaze, but they only see three empty chairs. Maggie raises her eyebrows, Voland looks back at the audience

...Then... we would also have...a male actor's coach... a female actor's coach and… *looks at Maggie again* a wannabe female actor's coach!

Maggie wrinkles her nose, Voland looks back at the audience Yes... and a casting director... one dancer and two coreographers are also there… *looks at Maggie again* and... a wannabe dancer and coreographer!

looks at the audience again okay… a couple of camera people, one or two production designers, one and a half actor, one actress … and … *he looks at Maggie again* a wannabe actress!

Maggie sticks her tongue out at Voland, the latter looks at the audience again Not to forget ... one ... two … three hacks!

Expecting another "wannabe ...", Maggie pulls a face, but Voland quickly turns to Azazello No ... this is certainly not an audience that wants to amuse itself ...
HIPPO
interrupts him, screeching But I'm ready for entertainment, Sire!
BASSOON
in an unpleasantly rasping voice Pardon very much, your Majesty! The circus is my love, cabaret and comedy I adore!
VOLAND
May I present: my assistants, Bassoon *Bassoon takes off his little hat and his glasses, and drops a graceful curtsy with his eyes closed* and Hippo ...

The little man bows, almost touching the floor

FREDDIE
perkily Bassoon! Hahahaha! And where is your instrument?
BASSOON
grabs himself obscenely by his crotch That's something you don't want to know, sweetie!
FREDDIE
annoyed These Russians! Vulgar as ever!
VOLAND
You can see, ladies and gentlemen, they are both going wild! At home, however, they are real bores! But since they are obedient and conscientious, they took the Boss literally when he ordered us "Spread out to Hollywood and produce!"
MAN FROM THE AUDIENCE #6
whispering Uh-huh, his boss! Romish told me he's a multi-billionaire!
MAN FROM THE AUDIENCE #7
whispering One of the ten richest men in the world!
MAN FROM THE AUDIENCE #8
I know Romish! He exercises himself in understatement ... if he says one of the ten richest, he means one of the three richest ...
MAN FROM THE AUDIENCE #9
whispering Maybe even the richest? Who knows? Why should one otherwise hide his name?
MAN FROM THE AUDIENCE #4
laughs softly Because... the longer I watch these people, the more convinced I am that their boss is called Disneykov!
FREDDIE
softly You're not far off! We have Disneyland and Disneyworld, the French have their Euro-Disney, and near St. Petersburg, the gigantic Disney-Rus is being built!
MAN FROM THE AUDIENCE #4
softly Really? And who's funding this colossal thing? Not hard to guess...
Points at Voland ...his ominous boss!
WOMAN FROM THE AUDIENCE #4
softly Sounds plausible!
MAN FROM THE AUDIENCE #7
softly Sounds interesting!
MOTHER
softly Sounds exciting!
WOMAN FROM THE AUDIENCE #2
softly Sounds somehow... eerie!

TEENAGE DAUGHTER
in a low voice Sounds cheesy!
MINNIE
in a low voice Freddie! Stop bullshitting, you goosy guy!
FREDDIE
in a low voice Hahaha Minnie! Everyone else has fallen for it, not you!
MINNIE
in a low voice Because I know your silly jokes!
VOLAND
Not disturbed by the soft chatter of the audience, who are talking across the tables As far as I'm concerned, I'm quite content with this domino ... after all no unnecessary prop ... it protects my sensitive eye area from the Californian sun!

Voland's introductory speech seems to be over. There is a pause. There is no applause from the audience, the people are staring at the platform, partly confused, partly curious, partly amused. Only Maggie is applauding wildly. But however hard she tries, her applause remains silent.

VOLAND
It's high time to start with the lecture! Azazello?

Azazello hands him a file, which apparently contains a manuscript. Voland puts it on the lectern and leafs through it. He does this for a quite long time. In close-up one can see that the "manuscript" contains nothing but empty pages. Voland lifts up the manuscript and shows the audience how thick it is.

To Azazello, who is standing next to him now Are you out of your mind, Cavaliere? Do you think we're in an evening class here?!? *to the audience* This, by the way, is Cavaliere Azazello, my personal assistant! As you can see, we made an exception for him, he didn't have to dress up!

Slowly Voland turns the pages of the thick manuscript Ladies and gentlemen! I'm trying to summarize Azazello's redundant text! Well: It all began when my Boss one day came to me with a worried expression on his face: "Dear professor", he murmured, "are you aware of the fact that in 1955 two and a half billion cinema tickets were sold in the Soviet Union?" *Voland's voice is getting more silent*

FREDDIE
whispering Only people who are tremendously rich can feel free to be so eccentric!
VOLAND
his voice keeps fading until it is inaudible Although I didn't know what he was getting at, I replied dutifully that the then Soviet Union was much bigger than today's Russia ... and anyway ... times are changing ... in those days ... well ... to cut a long story short, my Boss insisted on ... *His voice grows quieter until it can no longer be heard.*
FREDDIE
whispering I'm telling you: He is by far the richest man in the world! Who else would think up the idea to let his agent make an appearance with a little green lamp on his eye far from home?
MAN FROM THE AUDIENCE #9
whispering I must say ... despite the green slime that they smeared on his eye, the man communicates dignity and charisma ...
MAN FROM THE AUDIENCE #10
whispering This billionaire gotta be mad ... You should never contradict lunatics ... O.k., Professor

Waran is his subordinate and sure is well-paid ... but Greg? I'm surprised about Greg ...
MAN FROM THE AUDIENCE #11
interrupts him, whispers Why? Don't you think that BBL Pictures was bribed quite well so that this bullshit can take place here? You don't know Bogg-Leach! He tapped this Russian all right and put his ailing firm back on its feet with the money!
MAN FROM THE AUDIENCE #10
whispering Hahaha! Tapped! I like that! That's just like old tapper Boggsy! *points at the stage* But ... what's he doing there?

Voland has lifted his left arm in front of his face, and with his index finger makes peculiar looping movements in the air. His voice is becoming louder again. It sounds elegiac.

VOLAND
Ladies and gentlemen, I'm quite sure you remember the immortal scene of that immortal film: Sky and Earth, the clouds, the burning airplane, the nose dive, faster and faster ... and Nadezhda flying around her doomed bridegroom like a dragonfly during its nuptial flight ...*Voland's voice is becoming more and more quiet.*We were groping about in the dark! In addition we could see everything like through thick mist, owing to the preserved celluloid ... Then Maya Bulgakova ate her sausages and danced a waltz with that woman, the innkeeper ...

WOMAN FROM THE AUDIENCE #3
whispering What dragonfly?
MAN FROM THE AUDIENCE #10
whispering Who’s Nadezhda?
MAN FROM THE AUDIENCE #11
whispering I'm afraid I've lost the thread! Did he say sausages?
FREDDIE
whispering It's about Lenin! Nadezhda was his partner!
MINNIE
whispering Freddie is presenting his universal knowledge, as usual!
MAN FROM THE AUDIENCE #4
whispering No! Bulgakova was this writer's wife ... what's his name again ...
WOMAN FROM THE AUDIENCE #3
whispering, points at Azazello Folks, this guy isn't in disguise? He's kidding, right? Does that mean the fang is real?
MOTHER
whispering He's got ... that's a slice of pizza showing from his breast pocket!
TEENAGE GIRL
whispering That's hot!
MAN FROM THE AUDIENCE #7
whispering Since the Olympic Winter Games took place in Russia, it's probably common for Russians to run around in their ski underwear!
MAN FROM THE AUDIENCE #6
whispering Hey! Kathryn Morris! Didn't he just say "Kathryn Morris"?

The volume of Voland's voice has increased.

VOLAND
He described her down to the smallest detail: Kathryn Morris! This could only mean it was her ghost ...

MAN FROM THE AUDIENCE #9
whispering
The ghost of Kathryn Morris? I didn't even know she's dead!
MOTHER
whispering Well, she isn't!
TEENAGE GIRL
bored, whispering Who cares?
FREDDIE
whispering Well, she did look kind o'sick lately!
MINNIE
Freddie, keep your stupid mouth shut! I talked with her on the phone two hours ago!
VOLAND
George Clooney as a general ... and Ryan Gosling as a bridegroom ...
MINNIE
whispering
Aha! A co-production!
VOLAND
When finally Tognazzi as daddy, Totò as mommy, and Mariska as the tickling bride showed up, we cheered ...
MAN FROM THE AUDIENCE #10
whispering What?
WOMAN FROM THE AUDIENCE #2
whispering Paparazzi ... It was a slip of the tongue ... He means paparazzi ...
FREDDIE
whispering I've had enough! *aloud* Where's the cat?
VOLAND
acts as if he hadn't heard the interruption ... the granddad was ... a film director from Liguria ... then we knew that a pioneering … *gesticulates wildly*
FREDDIE
interrupts him Why isn't the cat here any more? Where's it gone?
MINNIE
Freddie, cut it out! You're impossible!
VOLAND
... invention had been achieved ... billions would pour into the movie theaters again ... without any popcorn ... each his own ... the cat, sir?
FREDDIE
Yeah! This black cat interests me ... great software ... hard to believe ... congrats on such engineers ... you know, Prof. Wallander ... Ryan Reynolds ... well, I don't know ... clouds, dragonflies, Lenin's private life ... that's all very well ... but this doesn't draw no audience into the movie theaters! Tell that to your boss ... with all due respect! Whereas the cat ... your cat, sir ... it will do the trick!
VOLAND
Do you mean Hippo?
FREDDIE
The black cat! I'll buy the patent! Or the licence! Whatever! I want that cat!
VOLAND
in a tired and bored tone Maybe he wants you, too? Ask him yourself! Ladies and gentlemen, I have explained the crucial point of our pioneering invention to you. My assistants will be glad to inform you about any further details!

Voland and Azazello disappear in the background, which is in the dark.

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House Of Funny Games (04/12)

Nancy comes in through the back door and sits down between Maggie and Romish.

MAGGIE
Nobody here knows these films, but I do! My Maestro loved them! *She turns to Nancy* And Voland loves them, too!
NANCY
What? Where is Voland?
MAGGIE
You're late! He's just left! That is, he's still there ... over there, at the back ... in the dark … he's been looking for you, Nancy! He staged the whole show for you, and you weren't there!
BASSOON
goes to the lectern and turns to Hippo) Well, Hippo, the gentleman over there would like to be your new master! What do you say?

With one enormous bound Hippo lands on Freddie's head. While in the air, the short, chubby guy turns into a huge black cat.

HIPPO
There's only one thing I can say: Fuck!

He digs his claws into the skin of Freddie's head. Then, with one single jerk, he tears his head from the body and bounces through the air back to the stage. About three meters above the floor the gory head is floating in mid-air. Blood splashes onto the platform. The twitching body is still sitting at the table, from his neck wound blood is gushing like from a fountain and sprinkling the area around him. Everybody jumps up from their seats and screams. They want to leave their places, but they hit invisible walls. Hectically people start to press buttons on their cell phones. But they soon notice there is no connection. Those who keep coolest are Romish, Nancy, and Maggie. The latter walks from one table to the other.

MAGGIE
Don't be afraid! It's all just a show!

Nobody takes any notice of her, so that she goes back to her seat beside Nancy and Romish.

Clearly I'm invisible!

Nancy is sitting rigidly and staring at the platform with vacant eyes. Romish is making a phone call (his cell phone is working).

OFFICER BURTON
voice on the phone This is Officer Burton, LAPD! How can I help you?
ROMISH
in a trembling, but relatively calm voice My name's Gregory Romish. On the 17th floor of the

Fairbanks Building there's been a murder ... That’s the conference hall … right under the glass roof ... please come ... quickly!
OFFICER BURTON
voice on the phone How did you watch the murder, Mr. Romish? Are you sure that ...
ROMISH
interrupts him Sure! *after hesitating for a short moment* I'm the killer ... I'm waiting for you here ... please come ... fast ... before they ... before I strike again!

Maggie and Nancy turn to him with astonished faces. Romish shrugs his shoulders.

I couldn't think of anything better so quickly!

MINNIE
I got it! No need to worry! Freddie and the cat are in league with each other! I mean ... this isn't Freddie, of course ... the real Freddie looks much more unpleasant ... but a robot ... same as the cat!
MAN FROM THE AUDIENCE #4
These Russkies! They've overtaken us again!
MINNIE
Big deal! Russkies schmuskies! We already had these simple cyber-dummies at the end of the last century!
HIPPO
leaps onto Minnie's head like before Cyber-dummie yourself!

Minnie's head is hovering opposite Freddie's head. Again there is screaming and jumping up of the audience. Another desperate attempt to get through the invisible walls.

MAGGIE
Freddie and Minnie of all people, who hate each other’s guts, are forced to poise face to face... This is going to end badly!

Nancy ignores Maggie's remark. Romish frantically presses buttons on his cell phone.

OFFICER BURTON
voice on the phone LAPD, Officer Burton, how can I help you?
ROMISH
Where the hell are your colleagues? There's been a second murder! Officer Burton, I'll hold you personally responsible for it!
OFFICER BURTON
voice on the phone I urgently advise you to see a doctor, Mr. Morbish ...

Romish wants to say something, but is unable to utter a single word.

Sir, we just searched the whole Fairbanks and found nothing suspect. By the way ... the conference hall on the top floor was locked ... The receptionist opened it for us ... Totally empty, except for some flies ...

Bassoon walks to the lectern and stands behind it. He acts the "serious speaker". He adjusts his busted glasses, then he clears his throat.

BASSOON
Absolutely adorable ladies! Highly venerable gentlemen! Incredibly cool teenie girl! You've grown on me … *his voice trembles, as if he was holding back his tears*

Hippo (in his human shape) goes to him and pats his shoulder compassionately.

Still I cannot spare you a teeny-weeny reproach: you are to blame for your fear! If you had paid more attention during his excellency's speech, you would know that everything serves as a demonstration of our ultimately innovative, spectacular invention in the field of film technology ... Mr. Burlington ... how are you?
FREDDIE
his head answers Call me Freddie ... I'm fine, why?
BASSOON
Just like that, Freddie ...
HIPPO
interrupts him What do you mean "just like that"? Those present are greatly worried about your lousy look, Freddie!
FREDDIE
*his headless body, with a slightly trembling hand, pours red wine into a glass, then pours it into his neck opening T*hose present? You mean Minnie! That's wishful thinking!
MINNIE
in a whimpering voice Why are you always so mean to me, Freddie? It's me who feels unwell! My head is turning!

The audience groans.

BASSOON
My dear Yasmine, don't spread any unnecessary panic here! You simply have a ...
HIPPO
screeching Hypo! Hypo!! Hypoglycemia!!!
MINNIE
You're right!
turns her head to the audience I'm awfully sorry!

Her headless body rummages about hectically in her handbag, finds a sweet, unwraps it, and puts it into her neck opening.

FREDDIE
Oh Yasmine, I'm so sorry! I didn't know you're a diabetic! I'm a diabetic, too!
MINNIE
Her head heaves a sigh of relief Ohhh! I'm much better now!

Both heads look at each other, moved.

MAGGIE
claps her hands The beginning of a Hollywood romance!

High-spirited, she nudges Romish and Nancy, who are sitting on her left and on her right, with her elbows. The two don't react. Romish is holding his cell phone to his ear, Nancy is gazing at the semi-darkness behind the platform.

BASSOON
claps his hands three times Most revered audience! We've had enough fun! It's getting late! We have to hurry!
HIPPO
screeching Yeah! Hurry! Hurry!! Hurry!!!

Very slowly it is getting darker and darker in the hall.

BASSOON
High time to say ...
HIPPO
interrupts him, screeching Yeah! High time! High time!! High time!!!
BASSOON
looks at Hippo disapprovingly
... to say good-bye ... Now that you have learned everything about our invention ...
FATHER
To be honest, my wife and I didn't quite understand what it was ...
MAN FROM THE AUDIENCE #9
You're not the only ones!
WOMAN FROM THE AUDIENCE #4
Prof. Valance was ... his voice was too weak ...
MAN FROM THE AUDIENCE #12
I wonder if you could possibly give us a short summary ...*pointedly turns to look at Woman #4* of Prof. Wotan's speech?

MAGGIE
Voland! V-o-l-a-n-d! Idiots!

Bassoon and Hippo look at each other helplessly.

BASSOON
It is beyond me how you couldn't ... well ... I'll say it in one single sentence: Well ...*briefly looks at Hippo, who nods dramatically, then he bellows*You lose weight!

A large part of the audience murmurs "Pardon?".

Am I talking too quietly, too? *yells in a cracked tenor* They tumble ...

HIPPO
screeches and makes appropriate movements Yeah! Tumble! Tumble!! Tumble!!!
BASSOON
... the pounds ... tumble ...
HIPPO
screeches even louder and does even higher somersaults ... The pounds tumble! Tumble! Tumble!! Tumble!!!
BASSOON
... they melt away whenever you can see food in a film ... it has to be an analog film, though ... digital doesn't work ... unfortunately ... and black and white ... well ... we're working on color films right now ...

As soon as he has uttered the words "see food in a film", the audience bursts out with laughter.

MAN FROM THE AUDIENCE #12
Now that's too much!
MAN FROM THE AUDIENCE #10
Satire at its best!
MAN FROM THE AUDIENCE #9
At its best? That's rather primitive humour!
WOMAN FROM THE AUDIENCE #4
Mike has staged all of this! He had a liking for weird jokes!
WOMAN FROM THE AUDIENCE #2
Poor Mike! Unfortunately he didn't live to see this!
MAN FROM THE AUDIENCE #12
Thank Goodness! If he was here, he'd go through the Earth!
MAN FROM THE AUDIENCE #8
No! He'd be proud! 'Cause this is hilarious!
MAN FROM THE AUDIENCE #3
Silly, that's what it is! Silly!
BASSOON
seems helpless, tries to drown the laughter Citizens! There is nothing to laugh about! In the region Krasnyivelikishyoltshnokamennoy, where our test viewings are taking place, there isn't a single overweight person left!

The roaring, thigh-slapping laughter is getting louder and louder. The only ones who are not laughing are Romish, Nancy, Maggie, and the teenage girl. Hippo looks embarrassed.

HIPPO
seems insecure You can check it out here and now ...
FREDDIE
his head is speaking in a weak, tired voice I've told you from the very beginning: The cat does the trick ... everything else is pointless ...
TEENAGE GIRL
jumps up, close to tears Stop it! You can laugh! You aren't fat! I don't feel like laughing, 'cause I'm fat! I never get any date 'cause I'm a fatso!
FATHER
DeWitt! Calm down!
TEENAGE GIRL
No! I wanna know! If it's working with me! It won't work anyway 'cause I'm too fat! But I'll try!
BASSOON
pulls out a miniature film projector from one of Hippo's overalls' pockets Bravo, honey! That's the right attitude! Young people are always ...
HIPPO
screeching... open for new things!
FATHER
I won't allow that! And by the way: She doesn't need such things, she's already too thin!
MOTHER
Sweetie, how often shall I tell you: You're not fat ... you're slim!
BASSOON
Most gracious momma ... be honest to your daughter ... for her best! Like myself you know that for a mother her child is always the slimmest in the world!

He hands the projector to Hippo, who walks through the rows of tables looking for something.

TEENAGE GIRL
He's right, Mom! *to Bassoon, after a glance at Hippo* Does it hurt?
BASSOON
Not a bit, honeycomb! Do you think that the people from Krasnyivelikishyoltshnokamennoy would have undergone our tests otherwise?
HIPPO
it becomes clear that he is looking for a place to put his projector Whereas everybody knows that nobody is as oversensitive to pain as a person from Krasnyivelikishyoltshnokamennoy ... Freddie, may I? *he places the projector on his neck opening*

Freddie's head nods. Hippo fiddles about with the projector.

FATHER
DeWitt! Forget it ... You're still growing!
TEENAGE GIRL
But Dad! Tyler promised to go out with me if I lose a few kilos!
FATHER
I forbid it! Get it? And that's my final word!
BASSOON
Esteemed daddy! You're not entitled to forbid it! Because dating is ...
HIPPO
screeches, the people near him wince ... a human right! Yep, daddy, get that into your thick head: dating is a human right!
TEENAGE GIRL
That's quite true, Dad! Dating is a human right!
HIPPO
Turn around, darling ... look at the wall ... there's a good girl ...

Hippo presses a button, the characteristic humming of old projectors can be heard. On the white wall opposite the platform moving black and white pictures appear, repeated over and over again: A foot steps into a cake [from the Soviet film "Bad Anecdote", 1965, directed by: A.Alov and V. Naumov]. The teenage girl is staring at the wall. After a few seconds there is a skeleton in her clothes. Also some other people from the audience, who had turned around in order to have a look at the wall, have turned into skeletons. Nancy is still staring at the semi-darkness behind the platform. There sits Woland with his legs crossed on an old-fashioned armchair. Azazello is standing next to him. With a hardly noticeable smile Voland is looking at Nancy. Slowly she rises, but Maggie touches her arm and Nancy sits down again. In the audience those who are still in full possession of their flesh watch the skeletons with admiring looks and exclamations. Particularly DeWitt's parents are so pleased with their daughter's looks that they also turn to the wall, and are turned into skeletons immediately. More and more follow their example, until everybody is transformed. The female skeletons have lush bosoms and firm buttocks, the male ones have broad muscular shoulders and upper arms.

BASSOON
As you can see, loveliest ladies and masculinest gentlemen, we greatly value purposeful slimming!

On the floor there is a thick layer of blood and human remains. Nancy, Maggie, and Romish are sitting with stretched-out or bended legs, so as not to touch the floor with their feet. Frantically Romish messes about with his cell phone. It falls to the gory floor. In disgust, he hesitates to pick it up. Nancy gives him a tissue, and with its help he takes the blood-smeared device in his hand to make a phone-call.

BASSOON
Don't worry, most slender ones! What you see on the floor is only water, coloring, protein, fat, *he winks at Maggie, who winks back* sugar and salt ... and waste products! Hippo is going to dispose of the whole mess in a jiffy! Hippo! One-two-three! Get a move on! Double time! Go-go-go!

Nobody takes any notice of Bassoon and Hippo, since they are all much too busy being glad and admiring each other. One of the women who have kept their breasts and behind is trying to get a glimpse of her figure with her pocket mirror.A male skeleton flexes his biceps with visible satisfaction.

OFFICER BURTON
voice on the phone This is Officer Burton, LAPD. How are we, Mr. Romish?
ROMISH
croaking breathlessly It's your fault, Burton! A massacre, Burton, a massacre, here in the Fairbanks Building!
OFFICER BURTON
voice on the phone Mr. Romish! Be a man! Have a girl come to your room!

INT. POLICE STATION - DAY

About a half dozen uniformed policemen and policewomen crowd around a colleague, laughing, as he is talking on the phone in front of an elaborate setup with a giant screen and a control panel. The screen displays a Google Maps aerial view of the city center of Rome, Italy, with a red dot in the center, not far from the Colosseum.

ROMISH
voice on the phone What? Are you crazy, Officer? Dozens of people have been slaughtered here, and you ...
OFFICER BURTON
laughing, to his colleagues surrounding him Haha! I'm the loony! *speaking into the phone* Mr. Romish! Your cell-phone signal was traced back! You're in Rome, Italy! To bother your local police just because you're bored during your Roman holiday ... that's not nice of you at all, sir!
OFFICER #1
speaking into the telephone The Roman chicks are hot, mister!
FEMALE OFFICER #1
speaking into the phone The Roman guys, too!
OFFICER #2
speaking into the phone Well! Get liquored up with Wrappa or Crappa, whatever this fuckin' Italian hooch is called ... And let us work in peace!

INT. CONFERENCE HALL - DAY

With a rake and a broom, Hippo the cat, whose hind paws are in oversized rubber boots, collects blood and body parts and throws them out the window.

ROMISH
talking into the phone What ... what ... what ...
FEMALE OFFICER #2
voice on the phone, imitating Romish What ... what ... what ... Take a long drink ... then rub one out ... and let us here in L.A. do our job!

Looking really outraged now, Romish ends the call.

INT. POLICE STATION - DAY

A man in a suit and a tie - obviously a captain - is approaching the roaring group around the policeman at the control desk.

CAPTAIN
severe, grumpy What kind of crowd is this? May I laugh with you? Burton, what's up?
OFFICER BURTON
Sir! An American in Rome ... a Mr. Romish ... that's his real name, we checked that ... well, this Romish calls from Rome every few minutes, and reports some killings that are s'posed to happen here in L.A. ... I ...
OFFICER #1
interrupts him Horrifying murders!
FEMALE OFFICER #1
Insane butchering!
CAPTAIN
to officer Burton Well?
FEMALE OFFICER #2
Well ... sadistic slaughtering!
OFFICER #2
In Hollywood!
OFFICER #3
In the Fairbanks Building! In a conference hall! At the very top! Under the roof!
CAPTAIN
Now you all shut up! I got it! Burton?
OFFICER BURTON
Sir, right after the first call, about two hours ago, two colleagues searched the Fairbanks from the top to the bottom, several times ...
CAPTAIN
Yes?
OFFICER BURTON
No! They found nothing! Zero, nil, nada! Nothing! The conference room in question, under the glass roof, was deserted ...
CAPTAIN
uninterested Aha ... a loony ... and you find that funny ...

He walks away, shaking his head, then stops abruptly and turns around.

Did you say Fairbanks?

Burton and the others nod My daughter just sent me a YouTube video! She's crazy about contemporary art at the moment! Wait ...

He presses a few buttons on the control desk. On the screen the white facade of the Fairbanks building appears. From the open window on the top floor blood and chunks of flesh and fat pour out. They form a stream that is becoming smaller as it is running down and soiling the bright facade. From time to time the camera pans to the street, where some people are standing, all of them with their cell phones lifted high, and to the windows of the surrounding buildings, where people are standing and also filming and taking pictures, partly with telephoto. The captain pushes a few more buttons, and the screen is split in two. Beside the video, which has the heading Performance Art in Hollywood*, one can see the users' comments:*

SCREEN

LOL
Hot!
Awesome!!
Kicks ass!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!
That look so real!
It IS real!
Hahahaha!!!!!!!!!!
No, honest: how did u do it?
filmed with the camera of my cell
My cousin just texted she's standing in front of the Fairbanks and filming!
My mom and I are here, to. It looks jussst scary!!!!!!!!!!!!
This German dude does it as well, his name's Von .... something with Von, need help!
Von Braun (I guess)
Von Karajan?
Von Stroheim!
Von Sternberg!
Ouch! They're all long dead (Wiki)
LOL :)))
Splendid symbolization of film making and structural violence in Hwd!!!!!!!
is a WOMAN comes from BULGARIA, her names CRYSTAL
The dude you mean is Nietsche, from Austria
spells Nietzsche
Friedrich Nietzsche, 1844-1900 ???????
Nietzsche in Naples. That was 4-5 years ago. He called it Mystery Orgasm
My girlfriend has that every time! (Smiley) With her, you can't call it a performance
(Tears-Emoji and Thumbs Down)
LMAO
Terry Gilliam filmed in Naples, not Nitche
The one who uses pigs. When did pigs start wearing wedding rings???????
Watch the video closely before you insult the great Nietzsche, you moron. Link

The Captain clicks on the link: Enlarged view of bloody tissue, in which a wedding ring is visible.

Yuck
For Chrissake!
It is well known that in the USA the bodies of guys sentenced to death are sold to the highest bidder
Your lying, red asshole
Troll
Don't feed the troll
I'm afraid that's right it only goes for pedophiles though
And terrorists
Muslims are cut up ALIVE in Guantanamo
Fuck you Americanophobe
Troll
LOL ;))
Canadian Patriot Pig!!! Three lines of laughing emojis, Link

The Captain clicks on the link: Enlarged view of fat and muscle chunks, in the foreground bloody skin fragments with a tattoo of a waving Canadian flag.

LMAO
OMG!
Bourbon-boozer beef! A lot of laughing emojis and Thumbs Up, Link

The Captain clicks on the link: Enlarged view of muscle chunks, in the foreground a bloody skin fragment, with the following tattooed letters visible: 'ck' 'Dani' 'ennes'

It looks like a pig's ear?????????????????????????? Two lines of mixed emojis, Link

The Captain clicks on the link: In the midst of bloody tissue, a human ear is clearly visible

A strange pig snout!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!
A lot of appropriate and inappropriate emojis, Link

The Captain clicks on the link: In the midst of bloody tissue, a human nose is clearly visible
Ew ew ew
The well-groomed piggy never leaves the house without painted toenails... Barbie-Emoji, Link

The Captain clicks: In the midst of bloody tissue, a piece of skin with a hanging silver-painted large toenail visible

ROFL

While Officer Burton is scrolling the users' comments, those present are chatting.

CAPTAIN
(v.o.) nervously A photo montage, no doubt ...
OFFICER #3
(v.o.) Although ...
CAPTAIN
(v.o.) interrupts him An art video! Very professionally made ...

FEMALE OFFICER #2
(v.o.) So the mad caller is the artist?
CAPTAIN
(v.o.) Of course! What do we know about him?

The screen is split into three parts. On the left Romish's identity card appears, in the middle his enlarged photo, on the right a facsimile from his personnel file.

Gregory Danson Romish ... not too young ... ha! A movie guy!
OFFICER BURTON
(v.o.) Well ... accountant … with BBL Pictures ...
CAPTAIN
(v.o.) Accountants with artistic ambitions! Those are the worst!
FEMALE OFFICER #1
(v.o.) laughs Here in Hollywood? Every second person is ...
CAPTAIN
(v.o.)
interrupts her And he's in Rome ... Rome, Italy?
OFFICER BURTON
(v.o.) Yes ... that is ... his cell phone is in Rome ... in a hotel near the Pantheon ...
CAPTAIN
(v.o.) interrupts him, thoughtfully Rome ... the Eternal City ... Rome ... gladiators … Russell Crowe… Christians fed alive to wild animals … Peter Ustinov …
OFFICER #1
(v.o.)whispering to him Cinecittà ...
CAPTAIN
... Cinecittà ... I got it! This isn't an art video! This is a promo video for a future production ... probably another disgusting SM-porn … Send a squad car to Fairbanks ... to be on the safe side ... BBL Pictures ... who do they think they are! This is going too far!
FEMALE OFFICER #2
(v.o.) BBL Pictures ... isn't that ... wasn't there ... yesterday ...

The captain and the six officers look at each other, at a loss.

CAPTAIN
That was an accident ... no homicide! Although ... strange coincidence ... no! I don't believe in such coincidences ...
OFFICER #2
Maybe, sir, he got away to Italy with the stolen head!
CAPTAIN
What for?!?
OFFICER #1
Publicity!
CAPTAIN
pointing at the screen And this here?
OFFICER #3
Publicity, too!
FEMALE OFFICER #2
Then I guess Romish had a bad conscience ... he's old ... is afraid of the afterlife … so he called us to ...

CAPTAIN
Stop it! This stupid story is making me sick!
OFFICER BURTON
Yeah, that makes sense ... on the phone he seemed to panic and feel guilty ...
FEMALE OFFICER #2
I'm sure he's shortly before his retirement ... the whole business about the head was a rash action ...
CAPTAIN
Nonsense! A whole load of bullshit! Burton, send two squad cars to the Fairbanks ... no, three ... four! And I'll get an international warrant for this Romish ... in Rome ... silly ...!
FEMALE OFFICER #2
Maybe he meant Fairbanks, Alaska?

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Artists and Demons (05/12)

INT. CONFERENCE HALL - DAY

WOMAN FROM THE AUDIENCE #2
fiddles about with her pocket mirror What a pity! I can't really see myself ... and it's so dark here!
MAN FROM THE AUDIENCE #11
It's late! Let's go!
WOMAN FROM THE AUDIENCE #2
puts the mirror back into a make-up bag, takes out a lipstick, smears it on her bony mouth opening Yes, let's go!
MAN FROM THE AUDIENCE #14
to Bassoon, who is still standing behind the lectern Prof. Waldheim has long said good-bye, so we'll also ...
FREDDIE
interrupts him But why is it so dark here?
MAN FROM THE AUDIENCE #15
Is it raining? Shit!
WOMAN FROM THE AUDIENCE #3
looks up to the glass roof No shit, money! Look!

Everybody looks up, including Nancy, Maggie, and Romish. The glass roof is covered with swirling dollar bills. As soon as the wind has blown them away, even more fall from the sky, so that only little light can get through the roof. Nancy is gazing at the darkness behind the platform. Hippo keeps on sweeping the floor.

WOMAN FROM THE AUDIENCE #6
What's that?
HIPPO
briefly interrupts his work and looks at Woman #6 What does it look like, darling? Well? Well? Well?
WOMAN FROM THE AUDIENCE #6
intimidated But how ... where from ...

MAN FROM THE AUDIENCE #1
It's falling from the sky!
BASSOON
Bravo!
MAN FROM THE AUDIENCE #11
Professor ... Professor ... the professor was talking about ... about an airplane ...
BASSOON
Bravo! Bravissimo! You've come to the right conclusion!
MAN FROM THE AUDIENCE #9
Yes, but ... why ... where from ...
BASSOON
I won't torture you any longer ...
HIPPO
briefly looks up from his work Yes, torture!
BASSOON
This is a gift! A little token! A teeny weeny present! From our boss to the Angelenos!
FREDDIE
whispering As I said: the richest man in the world!
MAN FROM THE AUDIENCE #7
bewildered Angelenos?
MAN FROM THE AUDIENCE #4
bewildered To the Angelenos?
MOTHER
bewildered To what Angelenos?
MAN FROM THE AUDIENCE #14
bewildered To all Angelenos …
MAN FROM THE AUDIENCE #13
bewildered To the Angelenos ... out there ...
MAN FROM THE AUDIENCE #12
bewildered Why ... and we in here ... well ... that's very generous of your boss... but ...
TEENAGE GIRL
We're Angelenos, too! And Angelenas!
HIPPO
drops his broom and his rake, turns to Bassoon She's right! *to the girl* You're darn right, darling! This Bassoon is an idiot! Has no savoir vivre whatsoever! By the way, we're Angelenos, too! That is, former Angelenos!

As a cat he rockets vertically towards the roof, knocks a round hole into the glass and dissolves into thin air. A few dozen money suitcases fall through the hole into the hall and hit many people of the audience on the head. They shout "ouch!". Then a column of dollar bills comes floating down into the hall. There are shouts of astonishment from the audience.

NANCY
jumps up from her chair Enough! I'm leaving!

She runs out of the hall, Maggie and Romish follow her.

ROMISH
I'm coming with you! I'll certainly not stay here alone! I'm scared!

EXT. IN FRONT OF THE ENTRANCE TO THE FAIRBANKS BUILDING- DAY

Several squad cars stop in front of the entrance to the building. There's a confusion of hissing police radio voices. A lot of police are standing there, looking at the building, and shaking their heads. Maggie, Nancy, and Romish watch the scene for a moment, then turn around to look at the building. A woman with a CSI-print on her back is standing on a fireman's ladder, she takes samples from the traces of blood on the facade, and examines them on the spot. She gives a sign to her colleagues at the bottom. From the car that is closest to the entrance, a young policewoman jumps out.

POLICEWOMAN
It's human! I think I'm going crazy!
´

From the same car a young policeman gets out, obviously her partner.

YOUNG POLICE OFFICER #1
That was the Chinese ...
POLICEWOMAN
What Chinese? There ain't no one up there ...
Two older policemen are approaching the two. Romish dashes to the four cops, grabs one after the other by the sleeve, and shakes them desperately.
ROMISH
I'm Romish! Greg Romish! Gregory Romish! The Gregory Romish! Gregory D. Romish! Gregory Danson Romish! The Gregory Danson Romish! *yells and stamps his feet* The caller, God damn it! I am the caller!!! Doesn't anybody hear me?
MAGGIE
Come back! That's no use!
ROMISH
Rita, am I dead?

Maggie laughs and shakes her head. Romish starts to search the policemen hectically. Finally he searches the policewoman and finds what he has been looking for: the key to the handcuffs. He steals her handcuffs and chains himself up to the steering wheel of her car. Maggie is watching him, shaking her head.

OLDER POLICE OFFICER #1
the whole building is empty ... We evacuated the people via a side entrance, so that they couldn't see this mess here ...
OLDER POLICE OFFICER #2
Otherwise they wouldn't have believed us the story about the nuclear accident ...
YOUNG POLICE OFFICER
nervously Nuclear accident?
OLDER POLICE OFFICER #1
We told'em it was a civil defense drill ... evacuation because of radioactive contamination ...
OLDER POLICE OFFICER #2
We have seized their smartphones and tablets ... strict film and photography ban due to confidentiality … We loaded them all into buses, and off they went to the other side of the City!
OLDER POLICE OFFICER #1
They liked it ... Finishing time!

OLDER POLICE OFFICER #2
Well ... not all of them ... Some complained that there were no protective masks ...
OLDER POLICE OFFICER #1
We apologized and used budgeting measures of the City of Los Angeles as a pretext … In compensation, there were soft drinks and snacks as travel provisions... That calmed them down!

A small group of men and women in helmets and full protective clothing are stalking up on the entrance quickly. They walk through Maggie and Nancy, who follow them with their eyes, and disappear in the building. The squad cops are looking their way, too.

POLICEWOMAN
Well, I guess this operation is a bit useless! Hey! Where are my handcuffs?
she sees them dangle from the steering wheel of her car Strange!

She takes a seat in her car, loosens her handcuffs from the steering wheel, and fixes them on her hip again. Giggling, Maggie is watching as Romish, who is sitting under the policewoman, is trying to free himself from the handcuffs and slip out under the policewoman. Despite all his winding and contorting himself, he doesn't succeed.

OLDER POLICE OFFICER #2
Useless? They're going into the basement! There's this madman, grinding human flesh and pumping it up the ventilation shaft onto the 17th floor!
YOUNG POLICE OFFICER #1
Isn't that a bit far-fetched, Nat?
OLDER POLICEMAN #2
Why? No! He gotta be in the basement! It's not possible otherwise!
OLDER POLICE OFFICER #1
Besides, Romish's announced his butchery on the phone all the while! Killings, blood, slaughtering, devil’s handiwork!

Romish, who is sitting in the car, overhears this conversation (both doors are open), and has a shocked expression on his face.

MAGGIE
Look at poor old Greggie ... he's completely desperate ... his good reputation is gone ...

Nancy doesn't react.

He hasn't understood that the whole thing is a game ...

NANCY
A game? That is no game!

She starts running away from Maggie. Maggie is running after her. The four cops from the LAPD keep chatting.

POLICEWOMAN
But this is absurd!
OLDER POLICE OFFICER #2
Fact is Romish 's a sick, blood-thirsty monster that ...

POLICEWOMAN
interrupts him, sceptically ... that is sitting in the basement and putting people through the meat-grinder, to pump the brew ...
YOUNG POLICE OFFICER #2
comes running Ain't nobody in the basement! Was just announced! The whole basement under the Fairbanks is devoid of people, there are only cars! However, under one car… they found …
Pause; looks into the expectant faces of his colleagues a bat!
YOUNG POLICE OFFICER #1
horrified A bat!
POLICEWOMAN
springs up in horror on her car seat, Romish who is sitting below her groans. Quickly, she locks both car doors
Dracula!
OLDER POLICE OFFICER #1
shocked Dracula as a bat! Bram Stoker was right!
YOUNG POLICE OFFICER #1
shocked No, that was Coppola!
OLDER POLICE OFFICER #2
horrified A bat!
YOUNG POLICE OFFICER #2
A dead bat!

INT. CHIEF OF LAPD'S OFFICE – DAY

A huge screen integrated into the wall. Shots from Fairbanks Building with the blood stain from different angles. The Chief of LAPD is sitting behind his desk. The Captain is sitting in front of it. The screen is on one side of the room.

CHIEF OF LAPD
Too late, you think?
CAPTAIN
Much too late! *points at the screen* Meanwhile there are hundreds of websites with this video and similar ones ... Millions of people worldwide have shared these shots! That is why ...
CHIEF OF LAPD
interrupts him Theoretically it would be possible ... since the first video went online, only …
consults his tablet six ... seven minutes have passed ...
CAPTAIN
An eternity on social media! And besides, ...
CHIEF OF LAPD
interrupts him Well, the Governor and our Lady Mayor ...
CAPTAIN
interrupts him And besides ... Censorship is bad ...Censorship on the Internet ... a disaster! To remove the photos and videos from the Web, would make the user community even more suspicious ... virtually startle it ... a catastrophe ...
CHIEF OF LAPD
Yeah ... but we gotta give some kind of explanation ...
CAPTAIN
interrupts him We don't have to! I had Fairbanks Square and the airspace above blocked off for civilians ... and for the media! They're allowed to report as much as they want, as long as it's

second-hand ... If nothing new happens, the blood stain will be yesterday's news in a few hours! And we'll have time to think up a plausible ...
CHIEF OF LAPD
interrupts him, points at the name sign on his desk: Matthew G. Anguria Do you know what the "G." stands for ... no? It stands for ... "Gennaro"! ...

EXT. BUSY BOULEVARD – DAY

Nancy is walking rapidly in the middle of the lane. Maggie is hurrying next to her, trying to keep pace, but she keeps falling back (Nancy is taller and fitter than her). The oncoming vehicles go right through them.

MAGGIE
Can't we go on the sidewalk? I mean, what if we suddenly get physical again ...

Nancy ignores her, she walks even faster, Maggie concentrates on not falling back

... Bassoon and Hippo just wanted to have some fun! They meant no harm ...

NANCY
No harm!?! They're both demons, Maggie, demons! And my colleagues are their toys! My colleagues! My hard working colleagues are ridiculed by low-ranking demons, and he lets it happen!
MAGGIE
Well ... Your hard working colleagues didn't want it any other way!
NANCY
They were provoked! They were seduced! That's not fair ...
MAGGIE
stops; in a somewhat sharper tone Voland and his followers only do their job! They just obey orders … and seduction is their business ...

Nancy stops, too.

Let's not argue ... It was so much fun! S*lowly walks towards Nancy, but she shakes her head emphatically* And we're invisible! Look! Spirits of the air! Don't you enjoy it?

Again Nancy shakes her head, the expression on her face is grim

Smile, Nancy, smile! Please! Look! Look! Look! Look at me!

Weightlessly Maggie jumps onto a red van parking at the roadside. A short time ago she picked a bunch of wild marguerites in passing a median strip. She puts the marguerites between her teeth and dances with an imaginary dancing partner a kind of tango on the roof. When she notices from the corner of her eyes that Nancy isn't laughing, she waves the bunch like a fan and dances a flamenco. In the van a woman and a man, both young, are sitting; through the open side window one can see how they are laughing and chatting. Their laughter sounds shrill and unnatural. Hair style and facial hair of the two remind one of the late hippie era of the 1970s. The woman has very long straight hair parted in the middle. The man has long curly hair, in addition he is sporting a moustache and very long sideburns. Nancy looks at them. Then she looks up at Maggie. Her

expression grows increasingly dark.

Oh, Nancy, why don't you laugh! In earlier times I always made you laugh!

NANCY
I'd like to be alone now ... see you at home ...

She runs on. Maggie looks at her from the roof of the van. While running, Nancy turns around.

We shall die!

MAGGIE
No! We shall live!

EXT. IN FRONT OF THE ENTRANCE TO THE FAIRBANKS BUILDING - DAY

With excited and worried faces the cops are looking at the entrance of the Fairbanks Building. Something is moving behind the glass door.

POLICEWOMAN
Here they are at last!
YOUNG POLICE OFFICER #1
Took quite long!
OLDER POLICE OFFICER #2
Maybe there was a second dead bat down there ...

The glass door opens. On the faces of everybody present one can see sheer horror. There are also some screams.

INT. - CHIEF OF LAPD'S OFFICE - DAY

The large screen shows the audience of Voland's presentation, turned into skeletons, stepping out of the Fairbanks Building. Everybody is carrying a money case in their bony hand. However, the chief of police and the captain are not watching at the moment.

CAPTAIN
confused Januaro?
CHIEF OF LAPD
Gennaro!
CAPTAIN
Oh dear! O.K., my middle name is Wellington! My first name is William ... at school they called me Wellie Well ... also later ...
CHIEF OF LAPD
interrupts him What's that you're talking about ... what's that to me, Captain? Let's stick to the point, shall we? Well: my great-grandfather immigrated from Naples ... The Miracle of Naples takes place there twice a year ...
CAPTAIN
confused The Miracle of Naples … twice a year ...

CHIEF OF LAPD
A bloody affair! But very lucrative ... St. Gennaro is the patron saint of Naples ... he lived about two thousand years ago ... died as a martyr ... D'you understand?
CAPTAIN
Yes ... Or rather ... no ...
CHIEF OF LAPD
This saint is worshipped there like a soccer star! The people enjoy gazing at the fresh martyr's blood ... It's a fake, of course ... but good business ... Naples is crowded with religious pilgrims ... spend a lotta money ... Why shouldn't some smart guy get the idea to export the show to Hollywood!
CAPTAIN
stares at him in amazement That's brilliant, sir. But ... no ... nononono ... Miracle is bad ... very bad ... the word "miracle" creates morbid curiosity and mass hysteria, believe me! And the term "martyr" even more so ... It hides a highly explosive potential! The last thing we need in this delicate situation!

Short pause, during which both gentlemen are looking at each other silently

Sir, trust me! For the time being this mess remains what was stated about it in the first video: a performance! the work of half-criminal underground artists ...
CHIEF OF LAPD
Oh yeah? How d'you know ...
CAPTAIN
interrupts him They call themselves BANANA!
CHIEF OF LAPD
BANANA ... Uh hu... uh hu ...
CAPTAIN
Blood Art Nihilistic Anarchists of North America! Came to mind quite spontaneously! Sounds good, doesn't it?
CHIEF OF LAPD
Well, I don't know ... Banana ... Banana ...
CAPTAIN
... isn't an emotive word, sir ... Quite the contrary ... seems weird ... but in a calming ... though stimulating way ... in my free time I'm attending a course for creative writing and ...

The Chief of LAPD is about to give an answer, when he glances at the screen, and he sees the group of skeletons in front of the Fairbanks Building. They are all carrying a money case, and they all stop when they notice that the whole square is full of police cars. They also notice that the police officers standing close to them are staring at them, terrified. Behind the skeletons the SWAT-team is trying to sneak past them inconspicuously. The video has the title Flashmob of Skeletons at Fairbanks Square. *The Chief of LAPD presses a few points on his tablet, the picture is scrolled down, where the uploader's comment is written.*

CHIEF OF LAPD
reads out BANANA has hit again!!! Despite the barrier and the massive police operation, the nihilistic performers managed to demonstrate for the freedom of art in their own inimitable way!!! *to the Captain* Don't you think you went a bit too far with your creativity?

EXT. A PARK – APPROACHING DUSK

On the back rest of an empty park bench a crow is sitting. People and dogs are going past. The dogs without a leash run to the bench, stay there for a few seconds wagging their tail, and trot off. Dogs on a leash pull towards the bench. Their owners look at the bench curiously. Since there is nothing but the crow there, they call their dogs back and walk on. On the bench Maggie is sitting (she is visible or invisible, depending on the pov). The crow is sitting on her shoulder.

MAGGIE
still holding the bunch of marguerites in her hand You've been sitting here for a long time! Don't take it personally, but if you shit on me, I'll twist your neck!

With an indignant croak the crow flies off. Maggie pats a dog.

How long will Nancy want to be alone? One hour? two hours? Well, I'll just stay here until it gets dark. ... No need to be afraid as long as I'm invisible ... am I right, doggie?

The dog nods in agreement and trots off. The next dog visiting Maggie is a huge ugly cur.

Maggie imitates Nancy's tone My colleagues ... Low-ranking demons … *to the dog, while she is running her fingers over his head* what do you think, Bambi? Is Nancy a snob? No, she isn't! She has only changed ... I have changed, too! That's Voland! Voland is playing with us! But he'll give me Maestro back! Tonight! I can feel it! Dear dog!

The mutt smiles at Maggie and runs off. An about 14-year-old boy with a hood sits down beside the invisible Maggie. He is wearing earbuds and is occupied with his smartphone. When he spits out next to her, she jumps up. She bends down to have a look at his face, which is overshadowed by the hood. The boy starts picking his nose. Maggie tears his earbuds down and shouts into his ear Thanks! Thanks for the hint that being invisible doesn't just have advantages!

The boy jumps up, looks around fearfully, and runs away. Maggie sits down again. A neat pair of lovers sits down next to her. The young people are holding hands.

SHE
My classmates used to laugh at me ...
proudly looks at her pompous engagement ring but now ... they're not laughing any longer!

Maggie bends down to look at the young man: he is very handsome.

HE
My pals even more! Pearlene darling, a man who admits to Virgin Pride is in for a life full of humiliations!
SHE
Beloved Fitzgerald! Since my outing they've all been calling me Virgin Island ...
HE
And they call me … Virgin Fizz ...
SHE
puts her index finger on his mouth, he kisses it Oh don't say it, sweetheart! It would make us sad ... spoil the beauty of these moments ... but let's be glad ... about our will power ... about the purity of our bodies ... and souls ...

HE
... and about our faith ...
SHE
We're in purgatory still ... because we're sinners ... but soon ... we shall partake of paradise!

They exchange innocent kisses.

Maggie takes Fitzgerald's hand and presses it against Pearlenes' breasts. Then she seizes the young woman's hand and presses it on the young man's crotch. The young people slap each other, jump up impulsively, and run off in opposite directions. Maggie is giggling. She stops gradually. There are no people in the park any more. A slight breeze is coming up. Dusk is falling.

MAGGIE
whispering to herself Low-ranking demons ... well, I like Hippo and Bassoon ... what's the hierarchy of hell to me .. but ... Nancy's clever ... she knows something I don't know ... we will die ... that's what she said! So what? If I'm allowed to see my Maestro only once again, I'll be ready to die! H*er voice becomes loud* Can you hear me, Voland? I'm not afraid of death!

From the twilight of dusk an about five-year-old girl emerges. Carefully she sits down on the edge of the bench. She looks around her, heaves a deep sigh, then gives a little sob.

MAGGIE
in a tender voice Hi kiddie! Don't be afraid ... have you lost your mommy?
LITTLE GIRL
Yes ...
MAGGIE
Your mommy's looking for you ... she'll be here in a second ... Don't be afraid! Until she arrives, I'll stay with you, so you're not alone!
LITTLE GIRL
I'm afraid of the skateloons! They're over there! They'll come and cut off my nose ... and my ears ...
MAGGIE
The skeletons? What will they do? Who says so?!?
LITTLE GIRL
Jim Jeremy said so! And that I should run fast and hide!
MAGGIE
Okay! Jim Jeremy! And this Jim Jeremy ... is everything he says always true?
LITTLE GIRL
No, never! He always tells lies so the kids are scared and cry ... and then it isn't true at all ... and he laughs ...
MAGGIE
I'll tell you something: This Jim Jeremy is a villain!
ITTLE GIRL
What's that?
MAGGIE
A crook!
LITTLE GIRL
What's that?
MAGGIE
A cad!
LITTLE GIRL

What's that?
MAGGIE
An unbelievably bad boy!
LITTLE GIRL
giggles, then looks fearfully around her An asshole?
MAGGIE
That’s what Jim Jeremy would say: "asshole". Are you Jim Jeremy?
LITTLE GIRL
No!
MAGGIE
Then don't talk like him! There are so many words ... pick a nice one ...
LITTLE GIRL
interrupts her But where are you, auntie? I can't see you!
MAGGIE
Of course you can't see me! I'm not here at all ... I'm in your dream ... you're at home ... in your bed ... dreaming of me ...
LITTLE GIRL
precociously That's what I thought!
MAGGIE
Well? What is Jim Jeremy?
LITTLE GIRL
You tell me, auntie!
MAGGIE
counting with her fingers A rascal ... a scoundrel ... a crook ... a wretch ... a cad ... a villain ... Well? Which do you like best?
LITTLE GIRL
thinks, then whispers Cad ...
MAGGIE
Then say it!
LITTLE GIRL
whispers timidly Jim Jeremy is a cad ...
MAGGIE
Louder!
LITTLE GIRL
loud Jim Jeremy's a cad!
MAGGIE
Even louder!
LITTLE GIRL
yells Jim Jeremy's a cad!
MAGGIE
A real lot louder!
LITTLE GIRL
jumps up, shakes her fists, and screams Jim-Jeremy-is-a-cad! Jim-Jeremy-is-a-cad! Jim-Jeremy-is-a-cad!

INT. CHIEF OF LAPD'S OFFICE - EVENING

On the giant screen the blood stain is disappearing very slowly from the Fairbanks Building, beginning from the bottom end. At the same time the skeletons, one after the other, get back their

flesh. The captain and the Chief of LAPD are gazing at the screen like hypnotized. They look at each other in amazement, then glance at the screen again. The video bears the title: BANANA performance finished! Anarcho-blood-artists beat it!

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The Grand Delusion (06/12)

EXT. - IN FRONT OF THE ENTRANCE TO THE FAIRBANKS BUILDING - EVENING

All cops at Fairbanks Square run to one of the squad cars near the entrance to the building. There piercing female shrieks and hoarse male cries are heard alternately. A lot of cops are crowding around the car, peering inside. There sits the female officer on the suddenly reappeared Romish, trying to get off him. A handcuff is clasping his wrist, the second is hanging from the officer's belt. In his horror, he has also clawed both hands into her uniform. The officer tries to open the car door, but it's jammed. Colleagues are watching with mouths agape. As a result, they miss the changes happening to the building and the skeletons standing in front of it.

TRAFFIC COP
This is not consensual sex!
YOUNG POLICE OFFICER #1
I can't get the door open! Sam! Samantha!!! Can you hear me???
OLDER POLICE OFFICER #1
He's raping her... such an old guy... ugh…
OLDER POLICE OFFICER #2
His face seems familiar to me! *lays down on the hood, takes a photo, sends the picture*. Oh my God! That's Romish! The monster from Rome...!

At that moment, the partner of the female officer manages to open the door. The young woman throws herself out of the car. Romish falls out with her. They roll on the ground before the cops manage to separate them and pounce on Romish. The audience of the Voland lecture, most of whom have regained their physical forms, watches in shock. Minnie and Freddie stand hand in hand right at the front. Their heads are just about to screw onto their necks like bottle caps. Freddie's head is on Minnie's neck and vice versa.

MINNIE
Who would have thought that of old Greggie?
FREDDIE
Still waters run deep!

EXT. IN FRONT OF NANCY'S AND MAGGIE'S HOUSE – EVENING

Nancy walks through the door yard towards the entrance. She obviously still believes she is immaterial, as she doesn't stop before the front door and crashes right into it. She pulls out the key from her handbag, unlocks the door, and limps into the house. Bent over, with crossed arms and outstretched legs, she sits on the bottom step of the stairs. Her breath is still quick. She closes her eyes.

EXT. PARK – EVENING

The little girl standing in front of the park bench turns around. Her facial expression shows that she is proud of herself and expects praise from Maggie, whom she can now see sitting on the bench. She stretches both little arms out towards her with still clenched fists. Just before Maggie can say anything, the child is called.

MOTHER'S VOICE
(v.o.) Lynette! Lynette!

The child turns around and runs away. Maggie, who has also extended her arms towards the little girl, is left alone. She sighs loudly, adopts the bent posture of someone deep in thought, and closes her eyes. In doing so, she doesn't notice that Azazello has taken a seat next to her. Maggie looks at the clock, murmurs absentmindedly ... low-ranking demons…

AZAZELLO
Good evening, Margarita Mikhailovna!
MAGGIE
sits up straight, adopts a proud stance Margarita Nikolaievna, if we must... oh whatever! My family situation is none of your business! I'm Maggie! And you are Azazello; I recognized you right away!
AZAZELLO
I'm flattered…
MAGGIE
But you shouldn't be! Such a visage *points to the protruding tooth* is hard to forget! Are there no dentists in hell? No, there aren't... just like there are no opticians... but Bassoon is just a low-ranking demon, while you are a high-ranking demon... recognizable by your elegance and exquisite accessories! *Points to his breast pocket with the rotting pizza slice inside*
AZAZELLO
speaking through his nose, with an Italian accent Thank you! But my position brings not only advantages, believe me! I would have gladly passed on this assignment, for example! He sends me to…
MAGGIE
interrupts him Who sends you?
AZAZELLO
Well, who else... he... Messere…
MAGGIE
The professor…
AZAZELLO
As you wish... the professor…
MAGGIE
Professor Voland... a.k.a. …
AZAZELLO
cuts her off quickly Yes! Professor Voland! On his behalf... I bring an invitation... for tonight...
MAGGIE
Tonight? It's already tonight!
AZAZELLO
Well... tonight... rather in the sense of ... late at night …

MAGGIE
interrupts him Uh-huh!
AZAZELLO
strictly Why "uh-huh"? Don’t say "uh-huh", Margarita Mikhailovna!
MAGGIE
Uh-huh! I’m supposed to spend the night with Satan and can’t even say "uh-huh"!?
AZAZELLO
You are supposed to spend the night with Voland... by accompanying him to his ball... as the Ball Queen…
MAGGIE
Me of all people? When he so charmingly called me a wannabe dancer!
AZAZELLO
Don’t worry about your dancing skills! As the Ball Queen, you won’t have to dance at all!
MAGGIE Uh-huh!
AZAZELLO
You’re saying "uh-huh" again!
MAGGIE
I’m supposed to have stinky stuff smeared on my stomach and can’t even say "uh-huh"!?
AZAZELLO
Margarita Michailovna, you are to greet the guests at the ball! You are to ease Voland's burden of representation! And... by the way... here, take this...

He hands her a small golden jar adorned with pearls and precious stones. Maggie looks at it with a mix of perplexity and admiration.

MAGGIE
So it's not a witches' sabbath? *She unscrews the jar, sniffs* Oh indeed! A salve! A flight salve! Truly a witches’ sabbath!
AZAZELLO
Stop with your witches' sabbath! There is no witches' sabbath... that is a fabrication of the holy joes ... It's just a simple beauty aid ... rub it all over your body at exactly 10 PM... don't forget the scalp ... you’re no longer the youngest, Margarita Mikhailovna!
MAGGIE
And you truly are charming, Azazello... such disarming honesty! Thank you! I am relieved... I won't have to kiss the devil's ass!
AZAZELLO
Kissing the ass... I beg you... This pornographic kitsch that's circulating about him is what most bores him about his job... No, Margarita Mikhailovna! Tonight you will not kiss anyone, except... *pause*
MAGGIE
Except? Azazello! Except...? Speak!
AZAZELLO
Except he who you yearn for...
MAGGIE
My Maestro!
AZAZELLO
quickly Do not underrate your task! Being the queen of the ball is not as easy as it sounds... it will be very challenging - especially for you... that's why he chose you... Prove yourself worthy of your grandfather... Fulfill your assignment to his satisfaction! Then he will grant your dearest wish! And now go home... as soon as you're done, I will ring the doorbell...

MAGGIE
So Maestro is still alive...
AZAZELLO
Oh yes... so to speak! If you will... Lynette! Isn't that little Lynette over there?
MAGGIE
What? Where??? Lynette!

No matter how hard Maggie tries, she cannot see Lynette (or anyone else) in the darkness. When she turns to Azazello, he has vanished.

EXT. IN FRONT OF THE FAIRBANKS BUILDING - EVENING

Instead of police cars, military vehicles are patrolling Fairbanks Square. The entrance to the building resembles a military checkpoint. Romish stands in front of the building. He has a blue eye and a swollen cheek, his gray hair is partly ruffled and partly stuck together. He looks at the facade, illuminated by dazzling spotlights. He comes near the entrance, two soldiers approach him, check his papers, and search him. As he raises his arms, it can be seen that both sleeves of his jacket are torn.

INT. ROMISH'S OFFICE – EVENING

At the end of the corridor where Romish's office is located, there is a cleaning cart. Romish enters his office, locks the door behind him and leaves the key dangling. He turns on the desk lamp. He takes a piece of paper out of his breast pocket and throws it on the desk, then he takes off his jacket and lets it fall to the ground. He is not wearing a tie. His shirt is dirty, some buttons are missing. He sits at his desk and looks at the paper. It is an official court document stating that Romish, as an important witness/associate/accomplice in the BANANA case, is forbidden from leaving the city. He is free on bail under the condition that he appears for a psychiatric examination at Dr. Stravinsky's clinic the next day. Romish emits a short, bitter laugh that sounds more like a cough. At the same time, a soft click is heard, prompting him to anxiously look at the door. The latch moves down very slowly. He holds his breath. After a few metallic sounds, the key falls to the ground, the door opens, and Special Agent John Sable enters the room. The door closes.

JOHN SABLE
What are you doing here?
ROMISH
What are <u>you</u> doing here? Besides breaking into my office...
JOHN SABLE
That? *glances quickly around and points at the door* That's what they taught us in Quantico... I wanted to see if I could still do it... very rude of you to call it a break-in, when I was just... looking for you to...

As Sable points at the door, for a brief moment the other side of his face becomes visible, which had previously not been illuminated by the dim light of the lamp: it is disfigured by a huge black spot.

ROMISH
interrupts him That's absurd! You were looking for me! Where you've been missing since noon! And with you, my secretary...

A faint outline of Holly's figure becomes visible behind the window pane; her eyes glow blue like gas flames.

JOHN SABLE
raises Romish's jacket from the ground and holds it to his cheek ... to give you a brief report on ...
ROMISH
interrupts him Tomorrow, tomorrow, Agent! It's already late! I only came here to get my keys... I have to go home... I need sleep urgently... today has been... I feel completely shattered... by the way, what happened to your cheek?

Romish tries to sound as natural as possible, although a growing unease is taking hold of him. He notices how Sable tries to avoid being caught by the light; in addition, he starts to make small, rhythmic jumps in the air.

JOHN SABLE
That was Bogg-Leach! He resisted arrest and… *His jumps become higher and faster. They resemble trampoline jumps. He starts to make strange smacking noises with his lips.*
ROMISH
interrupts him What? ... Agent, do you need to urinate? Straight ahead, to the left in the corridor...
JOHN SABLE
Can't! My report can't be delayed! Unbelievable but true, he was actually in Tunguska... a Russian disco in Inglewood called Tunguska! Are there words? A den of thieves... terrible music... disgusting moonshine... Bogg-Leach... and his drinking buddies had started a riot... everything was bashed... a whole Swat team had to be called out to...
ROMISH
tries to maintain a matter-of-fact tone, but naked fear is visible in his eyes Really? Well, Agent, that's all very interesting... unfortunately, I have to tell you that Bogg-Leach is my least concern at the moment... rather... Banana... what do you know about Banana...?
JOHN SABLE
makes a grimace of disgust I'm not hungry for fruit!
ROMISH
Peculiar! That's the same answer I gave when your colleagues asked me about Banana during the interrogation… the answer brought me… *he points to his blue eye*
JOHN SABLE
See? I had the same thing happen to me!
ROMISH
But you just said… Bogg-Leach would have beaten you up... Agent Sable... I don't believe a word... not a word of your ridiculous story... Everything is made up! Why? What did you do to my secretary? Where is Holly? What did you do to her?

The springy jumps in the air become higher. Sable leaps off the ground and even briefly remains in the air before slowly landing back on the ground. While he is floating in the air, his lower body is in the light. In horror, Romish sees the burn hole in Sable's trouser fly. The smacking becomes louder and the grimacing stronger. He blinks and winks alternately with one eye and the other and nods abruptly. In horror, Romish watches him until he realizes that Sable is winking and nodding to someone behind him. He turns around and looks towards the window. A hand with unusually long, square, filed gray fingernails slowly slithers through the window slit and opens the window.

ROMISH
springs up from the chair and tries to reach the door, Sable blocks his way Oh no! No... no!

With a springy leap, the naked Holly moves from the window into the room. On the right side of her face, she has a similar dark spot like Sable. On the right side of her pale body, there are more such spots. The edges of her neck wound are widely apart, similar to a toothless snarling mouth. Holly approaches Romish slowly.

This is not happening! Rita said it was all a game... that all doesn't exist...

HOLLY
Rita is the one who doesn't exist... your Rita has been dead for a long time ...

INT. MAGGIE'S BEDROOM - EVENING

Maggie is wearing a ball gown densely embroidered with colorful gemstones. What is visible of her skin - face, arms, décolleté - shines milky white. The previously blonde, chin-length, slightly worn hair is now a deep red and plaited into a heavy knot adorned with a wonderful headpiece. Individual wavy strands of hair frame her face. The eye area is painted with bright colors, and her lips glow cherry red. She stands on her bed to get a better look in the mirror. Nancy holds the open jar, which looks like a miniature version of Maggie's ball gown, and sniffs it. She is wearing gray three-quarter cargo pants and a white T-shirt. With an admiring gaze, she looks at her friend

MAGGIE
And now you! Hurry up!
NANCY
holds the jar under her nose and sniffs it enjoyably No! Why should I...
MAGGIE
Every moment Azazello is ringing at the front door! Hurry up!
NANCY
You look beautiful… Your skin... Your hair... the dress is a matter of taste...
MAGGIE
There's no time for fashion talks! Right away, Azazello rings at the door... go straight to your room, Nancy, and rub the salve in!
NANCY
Why should I? I wasn't invited...
MAGGIE
There's more than half of the salve left, even though I applied it very generously... why would that be?

Nancy is silent

In fact, I wasn't invited either... I was hired for a job... I have to represent... a tough job... no trace of ball fun... while you...*Maggie pulls Nancy by the hand up onto the bed* you will dance with Voland!

They look at each other in the mirror doors of the wardrobe

NANCY
Voland doesn't dance! He limps... he has a sick leg...

MAGGIE
Who says he has to dance the Cha-Cha with you... or the Waltz! *she indicates a few steps of these dances, and as she holds Nancy's hand, the latter has to go along* He will dance the Slowfox with you... and you will lead… *takes Nancy in her arms and rocks slowly with her* He will look into your eyes... gently smile... and say... "Nothing is comparable to the dreams of ..." ... you know... while poor Maggie sits there and has to sweet-talk the "ball guests"… attractive people... Jack the Ripper... Freddie Kruger... Carmilla... Jason... Leatherface... Ted Bundy … Lucy Westenra... Hannibal Lecter...

They laugh, Nancy slowly shakes her head

oh please come on!

INT. ROMISH'S OFFICE - EVENING

Holly slowly approaches her boss, who stands as if petrified; only his eyes are animated, following every one of her movements. Just behind Romish stands the toothy, drooling, hoarse cackling Agent Sable. There is no escape for Romish. Holly places her hand on his zip fly.

HOLLY
This is something I've wanted for so long...
ROMISH
No! Please, no! I'm an old man... I have adult grandchildren...
HOLLY
slowly crouches down, her neck wound grinning widely So what? Minds age, but cocks remain forever young!

Loud tinkling from offstage.

INT. MAGGIE'S BEDROOM - EVENING

The doorbell rings. Nancy helps Maggie to get off the bed.

MAGGIE
This damned dress weighs at least ten kilos... I already have back pain...
NANCY
I'll help you... I'll accompany you to the front door...

Both stand in front of Maggie's bedroom door. Maggie opens it.

MAGGIE
No... I have to do it alone... you can't come... maybe it's better this way... maybe I have to reclaim the Maestro all by myself... maybe we'll see each other for the last time... who knows? Farewell, Nancy! Who knows what awaits me... Maestro... dead or alive...? Only one thing is certain: Voland will be disappointed that you're not there again!

She leaves the bedroom and closes the door behind her. Nancy is left alone. She takes the little jar in her hand and applies some salve to her forehead. She looks at herself in the wardrobe mirror.

She first places her cheek and then her outstretched arms on the mirror. She closes her eyes and leans against the mirror. Then she starts to undress frantically. Below, Maggie's voluminous dress is caught in the door. Hippo (as a human) fails to free it.

NANCY
v.o. from above Maggie! Wait for me!

Maggie and Hippo look up abruptly. Nancy stands at the top of the stairs. She wears a midnight blue, fitted, not too deeply cut ball gown, with finest white lace at the neck and hem. Her skin glitters like the golden moon. She is only lightly made up. Her hairstyle is simple. Hippo blinks lovingly upwards at her.

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Feline Casanova (07/12)

INT. ROMISH'S OFFICE - EVENING

Slowly, Holly opens the zipper on Romish's pants. She brings her face close to his crotch. Sable watches and laughs horribly. As Romish opens his mouth to scream, a loud cock-a-doodle-do sounds. Holly and Sable jump. A second rooster's crow is heard, Holly and Sable twist and make terrible grimaces.

INT. CORRIDOR IN FRONT OF ROMISH'S OFFICE

A cleaning cart stands in front of the door to Romish's office. An old woman frantically searches through the many pockets of her work apron. The repeated cock-a-doodle-do turn out to be ringtones from her cell phone.

INT. ROMISH'S OFFICE - EVENING

More cock crows follow. Holly and Sable slowly disentangle themselves. Their half-melted bodies fly out the window. Romish watches them, trembling, then storms out of the office.

INT. CORRIDOR IN FRONT OF ROMISH'S OFFICE

The old cleaning woman finds her cell phone and holds it to her ear. She is startled by Romish's sudden appearance and stares at him in horror. Her gaze lingers on his open fly. Romish snatches the phone from her hand and kisses it. Then he hugs the old woman and kisses her passionately on her mouth. He gives her the phone back and runs down the hallway towards the elevator; as he runs, he pulls up the zipper. The cleaning woman watches him longingly. She presses her index and middle fingers to her mouth and pouts her lips into a kiss.

EXT. IN FRONT OFTHE ENTRANCE OF THE FAIRBANKS BUILDING - EVENING

Extremely excited, Romish talks with the two soldiers at the entrance of the Fairbanks Building. He points at the building, the soldiers shake their heads. His gesturing clearly shows that he is begging for something. One of the soldiers is on the phone. The other turns around and taps his forehead. A third soldier in the background shrugs and laughs.

SOLDIER #1
Do him a favor, Doug ...Call the funny farm, they should pick him up...
SOLDIER #2
Already done!
ROMISH
Thank you! Thank you! Thank you!

An ambulance arrives. Two male nurses step out and take charge of Romish. Before he gets into the ambulance, he turns to the three soldiers.

Beware! They're coming back! They're thirsty for blood! They're hungry for sex! As soon as they figure out it's a cell phone and not a rooster, they're back!

INT. LIMOUSINE - EVENING

Maggie and Nancy sit next to each other in the spacious interior of the vintage limousine. Opposite them sits Bassoon. He is wearing a white tuxedo with undersized sleeves, a white and blue striped shirt with oversized white cuffs and a white and blue spotted tie. Hippo as a cat is sitting at the wheel. A glass partition separates the front from the rear of the car's interior. Through his cracked glasses, Bassoon looks at Nancy.

MAGGIE
Where is Azazello?
BASSOON
Azazello was unavailable! To say the least!
MAGGIE
I know you... you're Bassoon... a kind of clerk...
BASSOON
sighs Clerk... whatever… at least it sounds better than scum...

Maggie raises her eyebrows questioningly. Bassoon points at Nancy.

She has called me scum...

MAGGIE
haughtily She must have had her reasons!
BASSOON
She is not allowed to come!
MAGGIE
And she will come!

BASSOON
She was not invited!
MAGGIE
She is my friend! She does not need an invitation!
BASSOON
For a good reason she was not invited! Such an unfriendly, poorly mannered person has no place at Satan's big ball!
HIPPO
opens the partition, screeches, Maggie and Bassoon jump I like her! And that's that!
BASSOON
Does that mean you take responsibility for taking her along, even though she's not invited?
HIPPO
starts the car Of course! I've got a stone in my chest with the boss, you know that!
BASSOON
I only know that you're highly likely to get a beating from Azazello, just like so often before!
HIPPO
meows deafeningly Me?!? Me?!? Me?!? Me a beating?!?
MAGGIE
Enough! I take responsibility for Nancy's participation in the ball! I, the Ball Queen! Nancy comes as my friend and lady-in-waiting!

Nancy drapes the fabric of Maggie's generously wide ball gown over her lap. For a few seconds, she follows the conversation between Maggie and Bassoon. Then she gently pulls aside the old-fashioned window curtain and looks out at the starry sky.

BASSOON
Lady-in-waiting! Pfft!
MAGGIE
I can't even go to the bathroom alone in this ridiculous dress! Without help, I would pee all over! *looking out the window* Oh... how beautiful... the lights of L.A.!
BASSOON
Ridiculous dress! If Azazello hears...
NANCY
looking out the window further Did Azazello choose the dresses?
BASSOON
Hers! Not yours! You were not intended!
HIPPO
again opens the partition and shouts in, towards Nancy Putting on *yo*ur birthday's suit would have been better! What's the point... I like your dress... for its content! Who helps you on the pot, my beautiful witch? It's a shame if the pretty dress gets soiled! I'd be happy to help...
BASSOON
exasperatedly closes the partition Neither of you will need to use the bathroom! Physical activities are suspended! For practical reasons!
MAGGIE
Oh! And why do I have such terrible back pain? *bending towards the window, looking confused for the first time* That down there is not Los Angeles... Geez...
BASSOON
Pain is an exception!

MAGGIE
Pain... typically devilish...*scared* oh dear... that's the damned firmament! Shit-stars as far as the eye can see... we are in the middle of outer space... owie owie... must you play cosmonaut, you foolish beast?
Nancy pats her hand and smiles encouragingly at her.
MAGGIE
takes a stance again
HIPPO
turns around, opens the partition, points at Nancy This is in her honor... I lay the entire universe at your feet... you, my beautiful lusty mistress... soon and happily you will share my bed... I'm already getting excited! *Melodiously meowing, as he believes Nancy's smile is for him* Wow wow wow... you're smiling... smiling at me... you make me burn up... you hot witch you!
BASSOON
closes the partition Stop the horny blabber, Hippo! Everything in its time! We'll be there soon... Most honored of all Ball Queens, Azazello has tasked me with instructing you... It is very important... so listen to me attentively... You will...
MAGGIE
interrupts him ...greet the guests... What kind of guests, Bassoon?
BASSOON
You will see… do not interrupt me, most cheeky of all Ball Qu...
MAGGIE
interrupts him Likely a bunch of gallows birds, cruel tyrants, despicable...
HIPPO
as a human, opens the partition, laughs shrilly, winks at Nancy Hahahaha! Gallows birds... She has no idea... We're in Hollywood!

Maggie raises her eyebrows questioningly.

BASSOON
closes the partition Don't pay attention to him! Your job is as simple as can be ... not least because the cat and I will be there to support you constantly... We won't leave you in the lurch... So don’t...
MAGGIE
interrupts him Both of you?!? That sounds like a dangerous threat!
BASSOON
sighs ...worry...Now listen to me: you will sit on your throne in a leisurely, yet royal manner and offer every guest a hand to kiss... You will... greet every new arrival with a glib friendly phrase from your red strawberry mouth... for example... "highly pleased"... or also... "very pleased"... at most..."very much pleased"… Understood?
MAGGIE
A difficult text... I need to write it down, otherwise I'll forget it... best on your cufflinks... there was an eyeliner pencil… *searches in her tiny purse*
BASSOON
Yes yes, the funniest of all ball queens! I'm just Bassoon the clerk... feel free to be cheeky with me! Because soon you won't have the chance to… Under no circumstances... listen to me carefully, that's the most important, under no circumstances must you dare to meet His Majesty with the tiniest bit of impertinence... Be respectful to him… respectfuller... the respectfullest, you most snappish ball queen of the world!
MAGGIE
Does that mean I should crawl on my belly to him?

NANCY
looking out the window That means you must never forget that he's Satan... that he can destroy you with a single wink...
BASSOON
The lady-in-waiting has got it! I couldn't have put it better myself!
MAGGIE
I've got it! I'll imagine Satan as a mix of Godzilla and Terminator!
BASSOON
sighs As you wish... So... After all the guests have arrived, you will walk into the ballroom arm in arm with me...
MAGGIE
interrupts him Why not by Satan's arm?!? Am I not worthy enough???
BASSOON
sighs ...to show respect to the guests… to watch them enjoy themselves...
MAGGIE
parodies Bassoon's frail tenor "To watch them enjoy themselves... at your arm... Glibly..."... that sounds all duller and more strenuous than a commercial...
HIPPO
opens the partition again and shouts in Strenuous, yes! Dull? You'll wish it was dull!... We're here!!!

Nancy wrinkles her brow and stops looking out the window.

MAGGIE
moves the curtain aside, looks out You're not scaring me, blubberbutt... oh... the Old Bombay Hotel... Satan's Great Ball is taking place at the Ol' Bomb???

EXT. OLD BOMBAY HOTEL FACADE - EVENING

From a certain distance, the impression of an Indian temple should be created on the facade through colorful light projections. However, from close up, despite the darkness, it can be seen that it is an architecturally unremarkable, about eight-story building.

BASSOON
(v.o.) Not getting off yet! We take the elevator!

The old limousine rises vertically and stops in front of a window on the 4th floor.

INT. VOLAND'S HOTEL ROOM - EVENING

Maggie stands in the middle of the room and looks around in astonishment. The usual hotel furniture contrasts with the walls made of black volcanic stone, on which torches hang at regular intervals. Otherwise, the room is not illuminated electrically, but by candle chandeliers. In one corner there is a seating set consisting of a divan and two armchairs, in front of it a long coffee table; in the opposite corner a simple bed; next to it a large, open fireplace with a fire burning; in the middle of the room a small table with two chairs. Behind the seating set is a window through which the full moon shines. The chalky-silver light of the moon mixes with the reddish-golden light of torches, the fireplace, and candles to create a twilight that makes it impossible for Maggie to see

details, at least until her eyes get used to the flickering half-light.

MAGGIE
Is this how the Ol' Bomb looks after the renovation?!

No *one answers. Hippo, Bassoon, and Nancy stand with their heads down behind Maggie, whose gaze is fixed on the fireplace. Over the fire hangs a copper vessel from which steam rises, enveloping the part of the room where the bed is located in a near-impenetrable fog. It is just recognizable that a man is sitting at the foot of the unmade bed. He leans back with both hands. A man in a black tuxedo unhangs the steaming vessel in the fireplace and places it next to the bed. He kneels before the sitting man, dips a hand into the vessel, and begins to apply a steaming black ointment to one of his knees. The sitting man leans forward.*

BASSOON
takes a step forward Majesty...
MAGGIE
interrupts him Can't we open the window? It stinks of sweat feet... Ouch!

Bassoon pinches Maggie's arm from behind, Hippo clears his throat loudly

VOLAND
Not a bad idea! Bassoon! The window!

Bassoon hurries to the window and opens it. The moonlight shines in unobstructed. Hippo turns into a cat and disappears under Nancy's long dress. At the same time, Maggie approaches the bed. More details become visible to her, reflected in her facial expression.The bed is rumpled, as if it hasn't been made for several days, and the white sheets have a grayish tint.

MAGGIE
Is there no room service in this hotel?

Without stopping the massage, Azazello lifts his head and looks at Maggie.

Azazello! What are you doing there?

Perking his eyebrows Azazello stares at Maggie sternly. Bassoon, who is still standing by the window, gives Maggie a sign, but she doesn't notice him. He quickly moves to her side and stands next to her again. Maggie looks down at the bent figure sitting.

When will Vo ... Ouch!

Bassoon steps on her foot. Maggie turns to Nancy, who briefly lifts her head and looks at her worriedly. Nancy starts to say something, but Hippo, hidden under her dress, lets out a loud sneeze, causing Nancy to flinch. Maggie turns around again and looks at the sitting man once more; his gray hair is disheveled, his spotted white nightgown hangs around his thin shoulders. Bassoon begins to twist Maggie's inner arm with his thumb and index finger, unobtrusively.

Defiantly, although Bassoon is blowing on her I recapitulate: In hell *points at Bassoon's broken glasses* there are no opticians...*points at Azazello, who continues to stare at her and at the same time calmly dips ointment from the vessel and continues to massage* incapable dentists...

turns around, sees Hippo's face peeking out from under Nancy's dress, no cat discipline...
looks back at the sitting man and... and...

Bassoon has a hacking coughing fit. Hippo lets out a series of loud sneezes. Maggie raises her voice to overtake the two

...water and soap are nonexistent! Conclusion: hell is not a pleasant place!

Voland straightens up. He looks at Maggie. The moonlight reflecting off her jewel-embroidered dress blinds him, so he blinks and holds a hand in front of his eyes. Then he looks down sarcastically at Azazello, who shrugs with his shoulders.

VOLAND
in a low, hoarse voice Cavaliere, you have an extremely kitschy taste for women's dresses ... Bassoon and Hippo, are you suffering from a cold?
HIPPO
whispering, peeking out from under Nancy's dress No, Sire! It's just… it smells teasingly of pussy... I mean… mothballs!
BASSOON
respectfully Thank you for the inquiry, Majesty… indeed, the air conditioners here are much too ...
VOLAND
interrupts him, looks towards Maggie What are all of you standing around for? Sit down finally! You can also cough, sneeze, chatter nonsense while sitting… and...*looks at Nancy, who is still standing with her head down* be quiet!
MAGGIE
Majesty??! ... Are <u>you</u> Voland???

Unobtrusively, Bassoon grabs Maggie by her dress and pulls her towards the divan. The two sit down. Nancy also moves towards the divan, but barely gets any further because the cat Hippo is creeping around her feet. Maggie looks around ostentatiously.

How should I know that you... are in this room... Why as Satan, the Prince of Darkness after all, did you not take a suite??
VOLAND
observes Nancy, who is trying to move forward with small, unsteady steps Stop trying to be funny, Margot! Everyone in this room knows that deep inside, you are very sad … So behave accordingly!

Maggie wants to respond, but holds back.

BASSOON
whispers to her unobtrusively Not a good start, Queen! At least look ashamed now!

Maggie does not look "ashamed," but assumes a serious and dignified expression. Voland continues to observe Nancy, as she stumbles forward.

VOLAND
Azazello! Who is this person, who clearly suffers from balance disorders?
MAGGIE
But that is...*she does not finish the sentence when she realizes that Nancy is not responding.*

Azazello points at Nancy's feet. Voland follows his gaze and sees Hippo, hindering Nancy.

VOLAND
Hippo! You are the only one who has not changed for the ball yet! What are you waiting for?

Slowly Hippo creeps towards a connecting door

By the way: As the charming Margot just noticed, a shower would do you good!

BASSOON
A cold shower!

With an indignant meow, Hippo turns around and disappears quickly under the bed. Nancy goes to one of the two armchairs. She is just about to sit down when Voland groans. She looks at him. Sweat is beading on his forehead, his face twists in pain.

AZAZELLO
Forgive my ineptitude, Messere ...
NANCY
indicating the smoking vessel May I?
VOLAND
nods slightly.

Azazello stands up and sits on an armchair. Nancy kneels before Voland and dips her hands into the copper vessel. She shudders. Clearly, the ointment is scorching hot. Gently, she massages the ointment into Voland's knee. Voland relaxes. He sighs deeply and clearly enjoys the massage.

Azazello!

AZAZELLO
stands abruptly Yes, Messere?
VOLAND
How considerate of you, to also invite a masseuse to our ball, along with Margarita Mikhailovna!
AZAZELLO
Messere, I …
MAGGIE
But that's Nancy!
BASSOON
That's the Queen's lady-in-waiting!
HIPPO
springs out from under the bed as a human, shouting lady-in-waiting and masseuse!
VOLAND
leaning back comfortably on the bed A lady-in-waiting? Did I really hear that? When did Margarita Mikhailovna have a lady-in-waiting? And when did a lady-in-waiting have such skillful hands?

Standing up and briefly touching Nancy's back of the head

For a queen’s lady-in-waiting, this woman looks a bit too undistinguished ... she sweats too much ...

Indeed, transpiration is dripping from Nancy's face, damp hair strands curling on her forehead.

The tips of her neckline stick to her skin. She interrupts the massage. Her palm is dark red and swollen.

Keep going ... keep going ... why did you stop? ... are you offended because I can't remember any lady-in-waiting?

Nancy slowly shakes her head

No ... you're not ... Is there no more ointment left? Yes! You must rub in all the ointment... all the ointment ...until there's none left ...

Nancy dips her hands back into the vessel, her face twists in pain, she sighs softly. She starts massaging Voland's knee again. Everyone is silent

... That's good ... you're doing it wonderfully ... Azazello … who is this exceptionally talented person really?
AZAZELLO
That's the maid, Messere ...
VOLAND
Maid ... of course! I can well remember a maid! A lively young thing… now ... she's a bit older... and more experienced... all the better!

Since he emerged from under the bed, Hippo stands beside the fireplace on the other side of the bed. With paws cupped in his hips, he watches Nancy and Voland attentively. He wears a frock that's a bit too tight and a tiny white mouse in the buttonhole. The tips of his whiskers are gilded. Nancy shows Voland that the ointment vessel is now empty. With a nearly imperceptible head movement, he dismisses her. Nancy stands up and sits next to Maggie.

HIPPO
As I said, Boss, my bodily tension ... it's not better... rather worse! I mean ... a short ... expert massage … firm and gentle at the same time ... would work wonders!
AZAZELLO
standing up, rubbing his hands slowly against each other, letting the finger joints crack Come to me, you scoundrel, so I can massage you...
HIPPO
crying Sire! He says massage and means massacre! He has such rough, calloused hands … while the other...*indicating Nancy and kissing his own fingertips*
VOLAND
interrupting him We'll see...
BASSOON
secretly pushing Maggie Now it'll be fun, Queen! I*ndicating Azazello* he is brushing him... against the grain!
HIPPO
crying and muttering Why does everyone pick on a defenseless, rheumatic cat? What have I done to deserve this? I ... a duty-conscious cat, who...

Bassoon laughs sarcastically, Azazello grins and continues rubbing his hands together, Hippo crouches behind Voland's legs for protection

who will soon have a particularly delicate task to fulfill...

VOLAND
interrupting him irritably Enough of the theater! I said: We'll see! Besides, you're right... you have an important task! But not soon, now immediately!

He points at the moon, Maggie turns to the window, the moon has not changed its position. She turns back to Voland in surprise

It's late... Azazello, open the door... and close it behind Bassoon... Hippo … escort the ladies… I mean, the lady and her maid to the ball...
HIPPO
standing up, imitating Voland's tone It's late... move it...

Maggie, Nancy, and Bassoon stand up. Hippo offers his arm to Maggie, who leans on it, Nancy stands behind her. Bassoon stands behind Nancy. Azazello opens the door. Behind it, there is a pitch-black darkness. One by one, they pass through the door and are swallowed by the darkness. Azazello closes the door. He bows briefly, then looks at Voland, who returns his gaze with weary eyes.

BLACK SCREEN

Only the soundtrack is present: Voices, sounds (mainly footsteps, breathing, rustling of clothes) and the film music.

MAGGIE
Another power outage! Wait! I have a mini-flashlight in my …
HIPPO
interrupting her Poppycock! Who needs a flashlight when a cat is involved! Hold on to my arm, Queen, and walk quickly!

Sometimes his glowing yellow phosphorescent eyes flash

BASSOON
singing with a cracking tenor Spryly spryly ... always spryly!
Swiftly backwards swiftly forwards!
MAGGIE
in a calm voice I should have known ...no power outage...more like... a diablerie! *Whispering* Give me your hand, Nancy … your hand, so we don't get lost!

Nancy groans. In the darkness, five fiery trails become visible, taking on the shape of a red-hot hand.

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That Obscure Object Of Fear And Desire (08/12)

MAGGIE
What is that? Lava … Lava streams... are we near a volcano, Bassoon?

BASSOON
That's the hand of your maid, Queen! Her burned hand!
MAGGIE
Oh yes! I had forgotten … your hands ... your poor hands... does it hurt? Does it hurt very much?
NANCY
Yes ... hold on to my skirt so we don't get lost ...
MAGGIE
whispering very softly I'm afraid, Nancy … suddenly I'm afraid!
NANCY
whispering as well You'll be fine ...
MAGGIE
whispering barely audible But I'm afraid for you, Nancy! It's for you that I'm afraid!
NANCY
her voice is just a breath Don't show your fear ... show yourself proud and regal! I'll help you...
HIPPO
Stop talking this syrupy girlie stuff and hurry up! The boss is probably already there... He doesn't like to wait!
BASSOON
Don't make a big deal out of it, Hippo ... Sit down, Queen!
MAGGIE
Sit down?!? How... where...
BASSOON
Sit down... simply sit down! Maid, help your mistress!

FILM SCREEN

Very slowly, like turning a dimmer switch, an image becomes visible, first only as a silhouette, then increasingly clearer. Initially, a female figure can be recognized, who, hindered by her voluminous dress, sits down awkwardly. Another female figure assists her. Maggie sits on a throne. Beside her, on a higher but slightly recessed throne, sits Voland, still in his nightshirt, his right lame leg stretched out. Behind him, Azazello is seen with a headset. Beside Maggie stands Bassoon, with the cat Hippo on his hind legs. Nancy sits behind Maggie and whispers something in her ear.

NANCY
very softly Don't forget, you absolutely must keep your face in check! I'll help you! Pay attention to a proud, royal posture... but not in Voland's presence... hear me... never in Voland's presence...

Maggie nods. As the scene becomes brighter and clearer, it is recognized that it is a picture on a movie screen. If the film were not so scratched, one might think that Maggie and the others are sitting in front of a mirror. The colors are initially dark and dull. However, they become increasingly brighter and the image clearer, so that every detail is recognizable. The setting remains unchanged, as if a stationary camera were filming a stage performance. Two shadows with human contours appear at the bottom left of the image. They move upwards. Maggie follows them with her eyes. The shadows stop, as black silhouettes covering parts of the screen.

BASSOON
blowing in a fragile tenor Ann and Caligula!
HIPPO
chanting in a screeching falsetto The Queen greets you warmly!

Maggie sits up straight. She tries to maintain a poker face, which she does not quite manage. She barely raises her eyebrows. She hesitantly extends her arm. As the shadows bow and one by one "kiss" her hand, she slightly twists her mouth.

MAGGIE
stiffly I... am very... happy...

After the hand-kissing, both shadows move to the right and disappear from the image. Two human shadows appear again at the bottom left of the image, followed shortly by three more. Maggie sits motionless with her head raised and a haughty expression. However, her eyes follow the shadows as soon as they appear.

BASSOON
voice as above Ann, Marie and Liliom!
HIPPO
voice as above The Queen greets you warmly!
MAGGIE
Very pleased!

One after another, the three shadows kiss Maggie's hand and disappear from the screen. Maggie follows them with her eyes, as if without moving her head. But already again two shadows appear at the bottom left of the image, followed by three smaller ones. Maggie's gaze is directed at the three small shadows.

BASSOON
voice as above Nora and Mickey! Haba! David! Dulcie!
HIPPO
voice as above The Queen greets you warmly!

Without making eye contact and without smiling, Maggie slowly extends her hand to the two larger shadows for a kiss. She looks simultaneously at the three small shadows approaching. The two larger shadows do not move on but remain motionless in front of Maggie, bowing. More shadows come after and push themselves behind the three small shadows, so that the screen behind almost disappears.

NANCY
whispering to Maggie Your eyes, Maggie, your eyes!
MAGGIE
focusing her gaze again on the two larger shadows Very pleased...

The large shadows bow, "kiss" her hand, and continue on. The three small shadows bow.

MAGGIE
I am... very... happy!
BASSOON
voice as above Kitty... Oreste... Ruth... Ellen... Edouard... Ann!

HIPPO
voice as above The Queen greets you warmly! The Queen greets you warmly! The Queen greets you warmly!

Maggie's arm remains extended for the "hand-kiss." One after another, the shadows bow in front of her, bow over the hand, continue on, and disappear from the image. More shadows come after. Maggie has full control over her face. Her smile seems frozen. The ritual repeats.

MAGGIE
Very pleased... very pleased... it makes me very... I am... I am very pleased...
BASSOON
voice as above Orson... Jake... Sondra... Anita... Sebastian... Jane... Steve... Sancho... Elettra... Ramon... Roberta... Clyde... Roberta... Sancho... Sancho... Paul... Nicola... Conchita... Johnny... Valerie... Michael... Elaine... Cosmo Antonio... Clare... Jimmy... Messaline... Hughie... Stephen... Juliette... Holly... Nick... Tony... Pellegrina... Jimmy... Tony... Julika... San Paolo... Paul... Pinocchio... Billie... Bianca... Abundio...

The more "ball guests" arrive, the more relaxed and sovereign Maggie appears on the outside.

MAGGIE
interior voice, deeply affected
Now I understand... These shadows are characters from failed, never-realized film projects... figures from films that remained incomplete, never shown in cinemas... the cruel Voland ... you test me so hard... but I will endure... and save my Maestro... not only him ... us both!

Since it has become clear who the shadows are, Maggie's smile, her posture, the stereotypical greeting formula, and the hand offered for a kiss no longer seem so stiff and formal, but almost an expression of genuine, heartfelt feeling. Voland still occasionally turns his head briefly to Maggie, observes her, and occasionally gives a wry smile, but mostly he looks bored. As Nancy whispers something to her friend, he glances briefly at her and then at Azazello, who stands behind him. After a while, Voland closes his eyes. One might think he has fallen asleep. However, he grimaces painfully whenever Bassoon or Hippo make a particularly loud noise. In fact, the noise level is unbearable and irritating. Along with Bassoon's thunderous announcements and Hippo's constant screaming comes the music: with each hand-kiss, the first notes of the waltz from the Johann Strauss' operetta Die Fledermaus (The Bat) *overture, each time interrupted and each time played anew. The shadows become rarer and rarer.*

BASSOON
voice as above Maria... Fernet... Lucas...
HIPPO
voice as above The Queen greets you warmly!
MAGGIE
I am... really... very... pleased!
BASSOON
voice as above Napoleon... Napoleon... Napoleone... Napoléon...
HIPPO
voice as above The Queen greets you warmly!
MAGGIE
I am... very... very … pleased...

BASSOON
voice as above Maggie... Odette... Jack... Stepok...
HIPPO
voice as above The Queen greets you warmly!

"Stepok" is a small shadow. Maggie greets "Maggie," "Odette," and "Jack" with the usual formula, but jumps when she sees "Stepok" her eyes fill with tears. The fleeting touch of Nancy's hands on her eyes dries the tears and brings the formal smile back to Maggie's face.

MAGGIE
I am... very... pleased... very pleased... it makes me happy... I am... I am very pleased...
BASSOON
voice as above Quichotte... Chisciotte... Quixote...
HIPPO
voice as above The Queen greets you warmly!
MAGGIE
Very pleased... it makes me happy... I am highly pleased...
BASSOON
voice as above Helmut...
HIPPO
voice as above The Queen greets you warmly!
MAGGIE
Very pleased!

"Helmut's" shadow bows over Maggie's hand, and wants to continue on.

BASSOON

Helmut!

The shadow stops.

Helmut... You are responsible not only for your little protégés but for all the children present here... no alcohol... not even a drop... no overly cold drinks... no revelry… At the latest by 10 o'clock, off to bed... understood?

The shadow bows and wants to continue on.

HIPPO
shouting Better yet, 9:45 PM... at the latest... understood?

"Helmut's" shadow bows even deeper and disappears.

A pause occurs during which Maggie tries to stretch her neck as inconspicuously as possible towards Helmut's "little protégés". But no one appears in his wake. Voland observes Maggie.

BASSOON
blowing Ludwig...
HIPPO
shouting The Queen greets you warmly!

MAGGIE
I am very pleased!
BASSOON
blowing Ivan!
HIPPO
shouting The Queen greets you warmly!

As the shadow approaches, tears roll down Maggie's face, which Nancy again dries with the fleeting touch of her hands.

MAGGIE
I'm so happy... I'm so happy...

The shadow kisses Maggie's hand, then raises its "head". She strokes the shadow tenderly over its "forehead" with the back of her hand.

BASSOON
Onward! Onward!

The shadow disappears from the picture. A new shadow appears at the bottom edge of the image, making its way upwards.

BASSOON
blowing Marcel!
AZAZELLO
As I was just informed, Tsar Ivan is the last guest!

The shadow "Marcel" stands motionless halfway across the canvas. Slowly the movie screen fades away with it, and so does the shadow.

INT. SAME PLACE

A brief silence. Maggie slowly lowers her arm. Secretly she blows on the reddened back of her hand. She looks forward, into the black darkness. Nancy looks over at Voland, then fetches the salve jar from Maggie's pocket and rubs some cream onto her hand. Again Nancy looks at Voland, who turns slightly towards her and returns the gaze.

HIPPO
bellowing into the silence I solemnly declare the ball to be open! *louder still* And officially!

Everyone except Voland jumps; he squints and twists his face in pain.

AZAZELLO
Hippo! When the night is over, I'll pull your fur over your ears!
Instantly the cat becomes a small, chubby man with a scared expression on his face.

VOLAND
turning to Nancy, softly, tenderly Would you like to dance, Natalia Prokofievna?

NANCY
Yes!
VOLAND
loud and commanding Hippo! Lead the maid to the dance!
HIPPO
Oh yes, Sire! I jump to it! I was, am and shall be an obedient cat!

Hippo bows to Nancy and offers her his arm. Nancy stands up, bows towards Voland, and places her arm on Hippo's, who is a head shorter than her. Both move away slowly and solemnly, until they disappear into the darkness. Maggie and Bassoon watch them.

BASSOON
whispering to Maggie in her ear A lovely couple!
VOLAND
sighing with relief Finally, peace! Another minute of screaming and squawking… *looking sternly at Bassoon* and I get a migraine… *to Maggie* She thought I would dance the first waltz with her... in my nightshirt! *he laughs. Maggie is silent and looks straight ahead, breathing rapidly* Yeys, she flutes... She's so madly in love with me that she forgets I have a lame leg...

Maggie's head turns abruptly towards Voland.

MAGGIE
her voice bristles with rage Voland, don't be cruel to Nancy if you don't want me to be your enemy!

Azazello frowns darkly. Bassoon closes his eyes, grabs his forehead, and shakes his head. Voland bursts into loud laughter.

VOLAND
stopping abruptly My dear so-called Queen Margot... You forget that I am no more Voland than you are a queen... I am Satan... and naturally, I will swallow your friend Nancy alive tomorrow... before your eyes, Margot... or rather Maggie...
BASSOON
bowing down to Maggie, whispering into her ear Please apologize to him immediately... right now! He doesn't mean it... he probably does have a migraine... quickly... apologize, and he'll have forgotten it already!
MAGGIE
I apologize, Sir... I was impertinent... presumptuous... disrespectful... forgive my foolishness...
VOLAND
winking, in a friendly tone Hurry up... you have to keep playing Ball Queen… My guests are eagerly awaiting you … *to Bassoon* Accompany Queen Margot to the ballroom!

Maggie stands up. Bassoon helps her with the voluminous dress. They set off.

By the way, Hippo can't dance at all... but I bet Nancy won't get bored with him... our super-lusty hell cat will be shtupping the maid into wild and brutal ecstasy!

Maggie stops. She struggles with herself. Bassoon grabs her arm.

BASSOON
whispering into her ear It's all not true! He wants to punish you only for your insubordination just

now! A mild punishment, if you ask me!

They continue on their way. Dim music can be heard: the last measures of the waltz from The Bat *overture. In front of them is a door. Bassoon opens it and gestures with a movement for Maggie to enter. But Maggie stands just behind the door and watches the scene. Astonishment is evident on her face.*

INT. BALLROOM

Men and women are dancing in extravagantly luxurious ball attire in today's fashion; most are young and good-looking. Some wear ski helmets. Notably, many of them have a dark complexion, some look Asian, others are particularly blond and fair-skinned. The music has just stopped, and the people are clapping. Waitresses in long Dirndls and waiters in traditional Tyrolean costumes are going around with trays offering drinks. On a table there are beautifully arranged dishes. There is plenty of drinking and eating. Some guests are brandishing fried pheasant legs, others are feeding each other with tiny spoons full of caviar and small hors d'oeuvres. There is a festive and carefree atmosphere. In the center stands a tall, athletic, fair-haired young man. Chuckling and bending over as if he had stomach cramps, he is talking to three or four dark-skinned beauties who stand around him.

MAGGIE
That's supposed to be the ball?!? That's not a ball... I've seen that before... I was once secretly on the set…
Bassoon discreetly pushes Maggie into the room. When the guests see Maggie, they all bow deeply to her, but soon resume their conversation. A large serving cart is rolled in by four figures in tightly fitted ski outfits. They wear ski helmets and ski goggles, making it unclear whether they are young men or women. On the serving cart is a huge Fabergé egg. On closer inspection, it turns out to be a cake. Its surface consists of kiwi slices sprinkled with small wild strawberries and threaded through with strings of vanilla cream. The guests burst into exclamations of delight and rush towards the wonder of confectionery art with small plates. However, they are prevented from approaching the serving cart by the four skiers. All eyes are on the giant egg. No one pays attention to Maggie and Bassoon, who are observing the scene from the side. Suddenly the egg jumps up like a tulip opening its petals. Inside the egg is a life-sized golden statue of the violin-playing composer Johann Strauss, similar to the one in Vienna's City Park. Exclamations of astonishment and admiration, as well as enthusiastic applause, break out. The pieces of the cake are taken away by the waitresses and carefully arranged on another table. Suddenly the statue splits in the middle. A living, androgynous Johann Strauss with a dark, fluffy head, a fine, twirly mustache, a slim-fit night-blue tuxedo, and a white shirt appears. It is Nancy. Supporting herself with one hand on the edge of the table, she jumps down; a piece of the Strauss statue breaks off, and it becomes clear that it is made of chocolate covered with gold leaf. Nancy/Orlofsky peels the gold paper from the chocolate piece and sticks it into the mouth of a beautiful woman standing next to her. One of the skiers hands her a glass of champagne. She takes it and raises it with a radiant smile to everyone.

NANCY/OLIGARCH ORLOFSKY
Let's drink to the champagne...
the king of wines... to the bubbling majesty!

With her beautiful mezzo-soprano voice, she sings the champagne song from The Bat. *Singing, raising her glass to the left and right, occasionally grabbing a young woman by the waist and*

performing a half turn with her, or bending down to a sitting young man, gently holding him by the chin or nape, tousling his hair, playfully grabbing him by the collar, she wanders through the room. All eyes are on her. Her singing becomes gradually quieter, her movements slower (slow motion), until everything comes to a complete standstill. Finally, Nancy/Orlofsky turns so that she is looking in the same direction as the other people in the room. At the same time, a male voice humming the champagne song becomes louder, while a second image slowly pushes into the first "ball scene" until it completely disappears.

INT. BERLIOZ'S OFFICE - DAY

FLASHBACK

Maggie stands in a modernly furnished office bathed in the golden glow of the late afternoon sun. Behind her is a closed door. Berlioz is sitting behind his desk. Between Maggie and the desk, not far from a window, stands the Maestro. Gently bobbing up and down, he hums the Champagne Song.

MAGGIE
confused A... a bat?

The Maestro hums on. Berlioz remains silent. She first looks at the Maestro, then back at Berlioz

I don't understand... do you mean... do you mean Eisenstein as Batman? Mike, what is this?

The Maestro's humming grows louder as he sways in his hips. Berlioz looks at him with a slight smile and remains silent.

MAGGIE
So be it... Eisenstein is Batman... The world-famous Soviet film director puts on a black mask... black costume... etc.… flies through the air... saves Hollywood from the bigoted Hays Code... no no no Mike... that doesn't work! Who came up with this silly idea? Although...
BERLIOZ
interrupting her Not a bat, Maggie! The Bat!
MAGGIE
The Bat! Dracula! *thinks for a moment* Eisenstein as a vampire in Hollywood... in 1931... bites through it ... then returns... to the year... let's say 2001... no idea! Does this vampire hype ever stop?! Mike, your financiers are complete idiots! Oh, ok. I get it... you mean Eisenstein as a vampire hunter… well...

Maggie looks irritably at the Maestro, who is humming louder and tripping through the entire room. He picks up a plastic bottle of mineral water on the desk, twirls it around, hums and dances on.

Maestro, what is this... We can rewrite the script in this sense at any time! Isn't that right? What are you humming there…
MAESTRO
Singing loudly In the stream of grapes, trala, la la la la la, sprouts a heavenly life, trala, la la la la! Ta ta ta ta ta ta ta ta ta ta ta ta ta ta... but they also love the sweet juice of the grapes!

BERLIOZ
He is singing the Champagne Song from the world-famous operetta *The Bat*.
MAGGIE
Operetta? What are you talking about, Mike?
MAESTRO
goes on singing The monk in his silent cell, trala, la la la la la la, drinks from the source as well, trala, la la la la la! Trala la la la la trala ta ta ta ta ...
BERLIOZ
Your Maestro is more educated than you! He knows *The Bat*!
MAESTRO
Champagne sometimes floats down all sorts of things! Tralali tralala! That's why wise princes never let the peoples thirst! trala, la la la la la! Trala la la la la trala la la la
BERLIOZ
It was - to be fair - an unfortunate coincidence... The main character of *The Bat* is called Eisenstein ... *The Dollar Princess*... also the title of an operetta... Therefore the confusion… someone has mixed up the scripts… do you understand?
MAGGIE
No!
MAESTRO
toasting Maggie, then forcing her to dance with him Clink! Clink! Clink! The majesty is acknowledged all around the land ta ta ta ta ta ta ta ta ta ta ta ta ta ta ta ta
MAGGIE
releasing herself from the dancing Maestro What does this have to do with our project?
BERLIOZ You don't understand... you don't want to understand... there's no money for your *Dollar Princess*, there's no money, there won't be any money... not even as a shadow show on your bedroom wall ... The Germans... the Russians... the Indians... the Chinese... are all crazy about Johann Strauss' operetta *The Bat*! Two film goddesses from the subcontinent will play the female lead roles ... Then there's this opera singer... a blonde hulk ... supposed to have the most beautiful tenor voice in the world... well... and then... hold on… Rowan Atkinson as Frog!
MAGGIE
Frog?
BERLIOZ
Frog! *To the Maestro, who is dancing and singing with the water bottle, flailing it around so that water sprays on the floor* Is that necessary? The water spots on the parquet floor will still be visible for days… by the way... dear Maestro… we still need a good screenwriter... there's this Dr. Blind, who - as you know - stutters... nothing is more difficult than writing good dialogues for stammerers ... the perfect challenge for your talent! Well, would that be something for you?

Dancing and singing, the Maestro approaches Berlioz.

MAESTRO
Splashes water in Berlioz's face Clink! Clink! Clink!

Berlioz jumps up and runs around his desk to pounce on the Maestro. Maggie gets in the way.

END OF FLASHBACK

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From Dusk To Eternity (09/12)

INT. GUEST GREETING AREA

Voland sits upright on his throne and looks straight into the darkness. Azazello stands behind him. The second throne, where Maggie had been sitting, is gone. Black clothing items lie on Nancy's seat cushion. A sword leans in front of the chair.

AZAZELLO
Messere ... it's time!

Voland sighs deeply. He sits for a few more seconds, then stands up. Azazello stands in front of him.

VOLAND
smiling tiredly Duty calls...

Azazello bows deeply.

INT. BERLIOZ'S OFFICE - BEGINNING OF EVENING TWILIGHT

FLASHBACK
The last red glowing sun rays illuminate the room. The Maestro is no longer singing and dancing. He holds the plastic bottle in his hand. Maggie stands between him and Berlioz.

BERLIOZ
shaking with anger O.K.! That was a clear answer… the great Maestro doesn't need a job... he lives on air, love, and welfare! Now leave my office, you losers... I have work to do!
MAGGIE
I've known you for so long, Mike ... I know you were fascinated by *The Dollar Princess* … you wanted to make this film so badly ... and the series afterward! We worked on this project together for months ... and came up with a financial plan ... we were on the same wavelength… you ... I ... the Maestro … and Nancy ...
MAESTRO
Let's go …
MAGGIE
No, wait! Where is your enthusiasm, Mike... it's still there... I know it... I feel it... You are no longer young... like us all... and now you believe, finally, your big chance is here… International co-production... big budget… big stars... Musical... has always been your dream … but all that is nothing for you, Mike ... You are no Minnelli! And certainly no Powell and Pressburger!
BERLIOZ
Disappear!
MAESTRO
Come, Maggie, please!
MAGGIE
falls to her knees in front of Berlioz You are still angry with me over Nancy... aren't you? I know, you blame me for the failure of your marriage... I know, you never liked me... but please, don't take your anger out on *The Dollar Princess*... think it over ... tell me that the last word has not yet been spoken... tell me that you will fight for our project, as you promised Nancy!

The Maestro tries to help Maggie to stand up, but she clings to Berlioz' trouser hem.

MAESTRO
Maggie... Maggie... no...
MAGGIE
Nancy also loves *The Dollar Princess*...
BERLIOZ
That's the spirit! Bring my ex-wife into the game to soften me up... There is a role in *The Bat* that is tailored for Nancy… but as I know her, she will refuse it ... out of loyalty to you... Nancy is so diligent ... so versatile ... so talented ... much more talented than Barbra Streisand ever was ... she was waiting for a dream career... she could be a very big star today... but no... she had this burden on her leg her whole life… *tries to shake Maggie's hand off his trouser leg* ... now you are the burden on his leg… *points at the Maestro, shakes the leg even more*

END OF FLASHBACK

INT. GUEST GREETING ROOM

Voland is dressed entirely in black. Azazello hands him a large black beret with a red feather. Voland puts it on so that it overshadows his face. Azazello hands him the sword. Voland sheathes it in the scabbard attached to the left side of his belt.

INT. BERLIOZ'S OFFICE - DUSK

FLASHBACK

No one thinks of turning on the lights in the excitement, so the room is almost completely dark.

BERLIOZ
shakes the leg to which Maggie is clinging The untalented, lazy, always procrastinating Maggie ... who knows how to manipulate those who care for her ... Now you're trying it with me! Hang yourself as a burden on my leg… To no avail, darling, I couldn't care less!

The Maestro swings and hits Berlioz on the head with the plastic bottle with full force. Horrified, Maggie lets go of Berlioz' leg, so that he stumbles backward, loses his balance, hits the edge of the desk with the back of his head, and remains seemingly unconscious on the floor. A dark puddle spreads under his head. It is water from the bottle that fell out of the Maestro's hand after the blow. The bottle now lies under Berlioz' s shoulder. Disturbed, the Maestro and Maggie look at the motionless Berlioz. His eyes are wide open and staring up. He seems not to be breathing. With a loud sob, the shocked Maggie flees into the arms of her beloved, who holds her tightly. While they are embracing, they have no view of Berlioz. The eyes of the one lying on the ground blink in their direction. When they turn around and bow down to him again, he looks quickly back, staring, not blinking and not breathing upwards. Quickly, Maggie takes out her phone from her bag and dials. The Maestro hurries out of the room. A bell begins to ring very slowly.

END OF FLASHBACK

INT. BALLROOM

The same image as earlier: the guests and Nancy/Oligarch Orlofsky stand motionless, all looking in one direction. In the foreground near the door stand Maggie and Bassoon. Two newcomers appear: two men dressed in black, towering over the people in the room, standing on opposite sides of the room and facing each other. One is Azazello, still in his elegantly tailored tuxedo. He holds a round object in his hand. On the other side stands Voland in a magnificent black velvet robe, black gloves, and a nearly floor-length, dark red-lined cloak. The prominent beret overshadows his face. The attention of Orlofsky and his guests is directed towards him. When the twelfth bell chime sounds, Azazello throws the round object to Voland. This, which initially looks like a ball, flies through the entire room in a high arc. While flying, it becomes apparent that it is a human head. Maggie looks on in horror. Voland draws the sword, extends his arm, and spears the head with the tip of the sword. For a moment, he stands with his arm extended and gazes at the head. Then he slowly lowers his arm until the head is at eye level with him. It is Berlioz's head. Now we can also see Voland's face in profile: It is Satan with the green-gold reptile eye and the slanted, half-open mouth, in which three platinum crowns are twinkling.

VOLAND
Do you see now that you never have to worry about your film again ... others will finish it... The world is not there to serve your foolish ambition… Now... as an appropriate pastime for humans in the waiting room of death ... vanity is not forbidden, we would have overlooked that… ruthless ambition ... cowardice... blind obstinacy... all of them venial sins … part of the human basic equipment ... Cruelty and cunning, however, come exclusively to us! Will you remember, Mike? You are in the best position to think about it thoroughly... eternity is yours ... and nothing distracts you more!

While Voland is speaking these words, Berlioz's head decomposes in quick motion. Flesh and skin separate from the bone, melt away, leaving only a skull that Voland throws back to Azazello with a sudden swing of his sword.

Azazello! The Queen is thirsty!

Azazello bends down and straightens up with a bottle in his hand. He pours champagne into the skull and puts the bottle back. Then he picks up a full champagne flute from a tray held by one of the motionless waitresses and goes over to Voland. He holds the skull out to him. Voland, however, takes the champagne flute.

No! The Queen... should drink from it! *Points to the skull* She has a right to!

Azazello goes to Maggie, who shakes her head and steps back.

BASSOON
whispers to Maggie in her ear Queen, drink! The man to whom this skull belonged has been dead for centuries!

Indeed, the skull is polished like ivory. The empty eye sockets are adorned with two emeralds, the cheeks are made of rose quartz, the edge of the mouth opening is made of rubies, behind which pearl teeth shimmer. Voland toasts Maggie. All the guests do the same. Maggie sees Nancy/ Orlofsky, who smiles brightly and toasts her. Maggie slowly raises the skull to her lips and drinks from it. The image darkens instantly.

INT. VOLAND'S HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

A soft hiss is heard. Satan has changed into Voland again, who is sitting at a small table in the middle of the room, a chess game set up on it. An old brown-checked nightgown hangs over his shoulders, under which the dirty nightshirt is visible. On his feet he wears worn-out felt slippers. Maggie and Bassoon sit side by side on the sofa. Maggie's upper body is turned towards the window behind the sofa, she is looking at the moon, which is standing in the same place as before the ball. She turns back, with an amazed expression, she wants to say something, but Voland speaks first.

VOLAND
Azazello, where is Hippo the chess freak? Nothing is more suitable than a game to recover from a boring duty…

Azazello sits on a stool in front of the fireplace. He is roasting pieces of meat skewered on Voland's sword over the fireplace (hence the hissing). He answers the question with a shrug.

Louder Of course, chess can only unfold its stimulating effect if the opponent is an excellent... or at least a good... let's say... an average player! *Pause. Voland looks around the room. Louder* Now... I'm afraid that doesn't apply to our Hippo at all… *Pause, Voland bends down to look under the bed* Far from it, despite his eagerness, he is a thoroughly wretched chess pl ...
MAGGIE
interrupting him, with a slightly shrill, fear-filled voice Where is Nancy?

After a brief pause, Nancy steps out of the shadow. Her disheveled hair swirls around her pale face like a dark cloud. Only a few pieces of her night-blue dress remain, the once-white underdress is also torn, dirty, and stained with blood. Her neck, décolleté, and arms are covered with a dense, arabesque-like network of red scratch wounds. She holds the large black cat Hippo in her arms, his head resting on her shoulder, sleeping. Maggie looks at her friend in horror. Bassoon grins. Azazello is not disturbed by his work in front of the fireplace. Voland slowly shakes his head.

VOLAND
The maid Nancy will never cease surprising us … her talents are unique … and she is so agile! While she bewitches us all as a charming young man with the voice of a nightingale ... she casually bangs the hell cat into Nirvana ... oh Nancy ... Nancy ...

Nancy smiles and gently strokes Hippo's head. The cat sighs and purrs comfortably, but does not wake up.

NANCY
I have tamed Hippo ... He is now a well-behaved cat ... you will never get a migraine from his roaring again...
VOLAND
Hear, hear! The maid is confidential ... well, I can't blame her ... after all, she holds one of the nastiest demons in her arms like a baby! Bassoon! Have you ever experienced Hippo like that?
BASSOON
snarling with a grin Indeed, Your Majesty! But it's been a long time ... four hundred years plus or minus ... there was this young Italian witch ... Caterina ...

AZAZELLO
though busy with the meat, he is clearly listening intently Caterinetta ...
BASSOON
Right! Caterinetta! She managed to do it! However, Hippo did not fall asleep after that ... he just dozed off a bit ... he didn't want to miss the spectacle ...
MAGGIE
What kind of spectacle?
VOLAND
Well, the bonfire, Maggie!

Maggie stares in horror at Nancy's burned wrist. Voland follows her gaze.

Don't worry! Nancy is not as naive as sweet Caterinetta ... she will not end up on the bonfire ... or will she?
NANCY
If it is your wish, my Lord ...
VOLAND
My wish ... my wish is, after you brought me to my chess game, at least to have food and drink ... Azazello ... this meat ...?
AZAZELLO
Is done, Messere!
VOLAND
Finally! I'm starving!

Voland stands up from the armchair and sits next to Maggie on the divan. Azazello places two beautiful, slightly bloody pieces of meat on a plate and pushes the remaining meat on the sword towards the tip. He holds the plate out to Voland, who passes it on to Maggie.

First our charming ex-queen...

As Voland utters the word "ex-queen," Maggie's dress vanishes, and she sits there naked (jewelry, hairstyle, and makeup remain). Maggie quickly sets the plate down and covers her breasts with one arm and her lap with the other. Bassoon's eyes are wide with desire, trying to catch as much nudity as possible with his gaze. But Voland quickly throws his sleeping robe over Maggie's shoulders. Maggie wraps herself in it. She looks at the plate, looks at the sword, and shakes her head.

MAGGIE
Thank you... I'm not hungry...
BASSOON
whispers to Maggie Eat! Have you forgotten why you're here? You shouldn't offend your host!

Voland shoves both pieces of meat into his mouth at once and chews with relish. Red juice runs down his chin from both corners of his mouth. At the same time, he speaks.

VOLAND
Oh, what! If she doesn't eat, she should at least drink! Bassoon, pour the lady a glass!

Bassoon pours Maggie a full glass of red wine, which she drinks down quickly. He pours another one immediately. Maggie drinks the second glass. He pours again. Maggie takes the glass in her hand. She looks at Nancy, who is still standing in the middle of the room, holding the sleeping giant

cat in her arms. Nancy watches Voland, who is chewing noisily while meat juice drips down onto his nightshirt.

NANCY
I'm also hungry!
VOLAND
Azazello! Give her some meat! The former maid should get something too!

At the word "former maid", Maggie, Bassoon, and even Azazello stare at Nancy and wait for her dress to disappear. But it doesn't happen; on the contrary, the torn dress is as good as new. Voland takes Azazello's sword from his hand and holds it vertically in front of him. Nancy bends her head over it and takes a piece of meat from the tip of the sword with her mouth. Maggie watches her, fascinated and repulsed at the same time. She downs her third glass of red wine in one go. Bassoon pours another one immediately. Nancy chews with enjoyment.

Tastes good?

Nancy nods and indicates that she wants more

The cat doesn't even wake up from the scent of the meat... Nancy, oh Nancy... how did you fool around with Hippo.. .I don't want to know... whether you believe it or not... in such matters, I am rather prudish… another piece?... come here ...

Once again, Nancy bends over the sword and takes another piece of meat from it.

Please! Isn't she adroit? We could perform that act in the circus...

Bassoon smirks, pours wine for himself and Maggie

you and I... would you like that? But no, I'd rather not ask, you would just *nudges a shy female voice* "If it is your wish, my Lord"...

Chewing and smiling, Nancy takes an apple from the fruit bowl, holding Hippo with one hand, and sits down on one of the armchairs, the giant cat still in her arms. She bites into the apple heartily. Voland doesn't take his eyes off her. Maggie follows every movement of her friend, while she continually sips from her fourth glass of wine. Azazello pours Voland a half glass of wine and stands behind the armchair on the other side of the coffee table.

Yes! Make yourself comfortable! Although no one told you to sit down, but please... what's the matter... feel at home... the apple wasn't offered to you... and you just took it… *looks into the fruit bowl* and the nicest one at that!

Voland moves closer to Maggie and puts an arm around her shoulder. Maggie clearly feels uncomfortable. She is squeezed between Voland and Bassoon.

Do you know why Nancy - unlike you - feels so at home with us?

MAGGIE
mumbling, holding the empty glass with one hand, gesticulating Nancy is … ada … ptable ... so ... flexi … ble she is… back then... in New York...

VOLAND
interrupting her I know! *Wozzeck*! How wonderful she was... moved so confidently, as if she had already stood on the stage of the Met ten times… We clapped our hands until they were sore... isn't that right, Azazello? *Azazello nods briefly* By the way, Cavaliere, why are you standing so stiffly? Sit down! Eat, drink! That's the cozy part of the evening, isn't it, Maggie?
pushing Maggie closer

Azazello sits down. He makes a dark face. He and Bassoon take something to eat. The clinking of cutlery and dishes. Maggie puts the glass to her lips, thinks about it, and then bites into a small piece of white bread instead. She continues to nibble on the bread. Clearly, she finds Voland's closeness unpleasant, she slides away from him, which again results in a closer physical contact with Bassoon, who is loudly chewing, smacking, and lasciviously licking his lips. She can hardly take her eyes off Nancy. Voland alternately looks at Maggie and Nancy.

You can't get enough of her... nor can I ... She has undergone an astonishing transformation in just a few hours, hasn't she? Who would have thought so much was in Nancy?
MAGGIE
I would!
VOLAND
You? You're not surprised at all? I am... well, a bit... a little... not very... actually, not at all! With a woman who can bring a decayed corpse back to life, one must be prepared for anything!
MAGGIE
speaking with a mouth full of bread, indistinctly What... what...?
NANCY
intensely No!
VOLAND
Oh, come on! Snows of yesteryear! Or rather: Maggots of yesteryear!
MAGGIE
having white bread crumbs in the corners of her mouth and on her chin Maggots... in the sense of... worms?
VOLAND
continuing to look alternately at Maggie and Nancy That was the second big highlight in her life! Back then, she outdid herself... and stole my heart forever!

A pause, during which Maggie, still with her lips and chin covered by bread crumbs, stares at Voland with a questioning expression. He nods slowly with his head.

What happens when such a woman... Nancy! takes possession of Satan's heart, I asked myself then with a queasy feeling... Answer: she breaks it! Indeed... she broke my heart... what does she do... she wildly copulates with an unappetizing, small, chubby, elderly man... my subordinate!
NANCY
intensely, as before No!
VOLAND
But that too *turnes briefly towards the moon* are snows of yesteryear ...
BASSOON
Your Majesty... forgive my curiosity... You said: "the second highlight"... what was the first?

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MAGGIE
intense, to Nancy Go! Throw that furry freak on the ground and get out of here! I was mistaken! He doesn't love you ... no, he hates you ... you don't deserve to be hated ... especially not by the devil ... so give the cat monster a slap on the rear end and disappear! If you can't do it alone, I'll help you!

Maggie stands up. She sways and clings to Bassoon's shoulder. Nancy shakes her head. Maggie falls back onto the sofa.

BASSOON
Your Majesty...?
VOLAND
You're asking about the first big highlight in Nancy's life... no... that's really ancient history now...
AZAZELLO
darkly, champing With your permission, Messere... I'm interested, too...
VOLAND
Now that there's no more funny shenanigans from Hippo to look forward to, have I been promoted to your solo entertainer??? Am I supposed to tell stories from the distant past? Well... so... Nancy was a child back then...
NANCY
interrupting him, loudly No!
VOLAND
ignoring her a very musical child... she had a perfect pitch ... unfortunately, as it turned out later... ‘Cause she discovered a false note in the laughter of her own and Maggie's parents... what Maggie, the secret eavesdropper, believed to be an expression of joyful exuberance, was actually a deadly cacophony... caused by an overly daring drug experiment... they were all stoned on the highly explosive drug cocktail... all four of them, completely! As they got into the van, Nancy knew something terrible was going to happen... She suddenly wanted to scream and mark the appendix pain, but she lacked the courage for this little performance... a single moment of cowardice cost four people their lives... and made her and Maggie orphans! Right? Isn't that a great story?

Voland watches Bassoon and Azazello, as if expecting applause. Maggie stares into space. Nancy tries to make eye contact with Voland. She wants to say something, but she changes her mind and remains silent.

BASSOON
Super-brutal! Horriblest!
AZAZELLO
I like that! Life-long innocent suffering!

Maggie continues to stare into space. As before, when she was the Ball Queen, she tries to hide her feelings. With difficulty, she gets up from the sofa and stumbles to one of the chairs standing next to the chess table. She leans on the backrest. She sways a little.

MAGGIE
You're happy about her misfortune... and mine... Our suffering serves as your entertainment... well... that's finally your job... a sad job, if you ask me... not my problem... your hell doesn't concern me... and our family affairs... don't concern you either! Nancy! Finally throw the cat thing away and

run for your life! You think you've tamed Hippo ... how do you know what will happen when he wakes up! Cats are revengeful...

Nancy does not react. As Maggie sees that Nancy is not following her, she lets go of the backrest and slowly sways to the door

...and cunning... so I actually prefer... actually, I don't care about pets... farewell… *to Voland, while she is looking for the door handle and pushing it down* If you need another Ball Queen again... don't come to me!
VOLAND
You were a great Ball Queen! Haven't I already mentioned that?

All shake their heads

No? How impolite of me! You can blame Satan for many things, but he's not ungrateful! And he knows what's due! Sit down again... I want to return your favor …

Maggie hesitantly moves away from the door and sits heavily on the chair next to the chess table. She looks at Nancy.

As I said... You were a wonderful queen... a bit stiff, but... the guests at the ball liked it, and that's the most important thing! What I've been wanting to ask you all this time, if that silly cat of hers... *points at Nancy* hadn't thrown me off my stride… is there something I can do for you?

Maggie subtly shakes her head. Bassoon nods exaggeratedly and tries to draw Maggie's attention to himself, but she still looks at Nancy.

Maybe there's something you wish for more than anything else in the world? Just say it, and I'll make sure you get it!
MAGGIE
to Nancy Do you remember? Abel Gance? The crazy beginnings of movie dubbing? *The End of the World?*

Nancy puts the cat on the ground. It turns into Hippo the chubby little man and sneaks towards the connecting door. Nancy looks at Maggie with a smile and counts slowly on her fingers until eight. Finally, she stops with her right index finger on her left middle finger.

I wish... more than anything else in the world, I wish that... that... that... I wish that Nancy should be lying in her bed right now! This night’s happenings should be a dream that she will forget as soon as she wakes up tomorrow!

Maggie waits. But Nancy still sits there, her index finger on her middle finger.

VOLAND
Well, Maggie... that may be your wish, but the cat lady seems to prefer...
MAGGIE
interrupting him, in a pleading tone It must happen! Even against her will!

All eyes focus on Nancy, who leans back and rests her hands on the armrests.

VOLAND
Huh?!? It's not working! Your will is stronger than mine! Once Professor Freud asked in despair: "What do women want?" And I, no less perplexed, ask myself today: What does Nancy want? *with a sudden louder, booming voice* Does she want to finally oust me from the throne?
NANCY
I want to stay with you, my Lord, as the lowest in your entourage...
VOLAND
We have no use for you!
NANCY
I can sing for you! *begins to hum the* Offertorium *from Hector Berlioz's* Requiem *with her melodious mezzo-soprano voice*
VOLAND
Hohohoho... sing! Your vocal organ is all the same to my brave servants!
BASSOON
Your Majesty, forgive me! Her sweet organ isn't all the same to me!
AZAZELLO
grumpily To me it's all the same!
VOLAND
Right! Azazello is asexual!

Meanwhile, Maggie has struggled to her feet from the chair and with weary, unsteady steps, she has gone to the door. She doesn't have the strength to push down the handle and leans exhausted against the door.

Now she is going to this door again... Bassoon... what's so attractive about this door?
BASSOON
It's a completely ordinary hotel room door, Your Majesty...
AZAZELLO
It leads outside... the lady is in a hurry to leave us...
MAGGIE
It's late… *she looks out the window, the moon has not changed its position in the night sky* Yes, I want to go home! I want to be alone! What else should I be doing here... I've lost everything! My wish has been thwarted...
VOLAND
*interrupting her B*ut not yet! I couldn't fulfill it, so you have the right to an alternate wish!

Maggie straightens up and looks at the moon. Bassoon makes encouraging grimaces in her direction.

MAGGIE
with a clear, powerful voice I want my Maestro! I want him alive! Here! On the spot! Immediately!

Before she has finished saying the word "immediately," a figure in pajamas stands on the windowsill in the light of the moon. Maggie looks at him, does not recognize him at first or does not trust her eyes. But when she realizes that it is indeed the Maestro, she runs to the window with a shout, jumping onto the sofa and just in time to catch the Maestro who is jumping into the room. Bassoon turns around curiously. Nancy, Voland, and Azazello do not change their positions.

VOLAND
Azazello and Bassoon, go... also you, Nancy... Let me be alone with Maestro and Margarita.

Bassoon? Your cat crony should drink a big pot of strong coffee! The scoundrel should be fresh and cheerful, as I will need him soon...

The addressed leave the room through the connecting door.
Maggie embraces the Maestro, who does not return the embrace. Both stand on the sofa and are bathed in the gleaming moonlight.

MAGGIE
Oh Maestro! You're alive! You're alive! You're alive!
MAESTRO
whispering hoarsely Go away, Margot... I'm afraid!
MAGGIE
My poor beloved... don't be afraid... I'm with you!
MAESTRO
weepy voice I'm afraid of you, Margot… Why do you torment me... no full moon night passes without you appearing to me in a dream and sprinkling salt on my wounds… why couldn't you at least skip this night... after all the excitement I've had...
MAGGIE
I'm no apparition! *pinches him lightly on the cheek*
MAESTRO
Owie!
MAGGIE
See?
MAESTRO
You're more real than ever… Now I also remember... because of all the commotion last night ... Sister Priss forgot to give me my shot!
MAGGIE
bites him gently on the earlobe And that? Is that also Sister Priss?
MAESTRO
softly Owie...

Maggie and Maestro kiss each other tenderly. Voland stands up from the sofa, glances at the love couple briefly, and sits down on one of the armchairs.

You're really here... Margot... Maggie... where am I... how… *they continue to kiss*

VOLAND
Now now now ... you'll go on smooching later... we don't have much time left! Sit down!
MAESTRO
Who is that?

Maggie gets off the sofa, helping the Maestro down as well, both sit down. In the process, Maggie's night gown opens, revealing that she is naked underneath.

MAGGIE
That's Professor Voland! He's helping us!
The Maestro looks meaningfully first at Maggie's bare skin (who quickly pulls her night gown back), then at Voland, who is sitting there in his nightshirt. He looks at Maggie reproachfully. His astonished look also indicates that for the first time, he notices Maggie's changed appearance - makeup, head ornaments, dense tizian red hair, smooth rosy skin.

You don't have to be jealous! He's the Devil!

MAESTRO
Oh my God!
VOLAND
You don't have to be offensive right away! Well... since you just came from the madhouse... I'll close one eye… Maggie... please… give the Maestro a drink so he can finally come to his senses... no... not wine... something stronger… yes... that! That's exactly what's needed!

Maggie gives the Maestro a clear liquid from a crystal carafe into a shot glass. The Maestro drinks and Maggie refills. She pets him, takes off the crooked hat, gently runs her fingers through his tangled hair, and puts the hat back on.

MAGGIE
Madhouse ... poor … poor... poorest Maestro ... but now everything will be fine… I promise!
MAESTRO
he moves the full shot glass, which Maggie is offering him, away with his hand Nothing will be fine... the devil… You and Nancy were too often around your grandfather on the set as children...
VOLAND
I <u>am</u> Satan!
MAGGIE
He really is!
VOLAND
Would you like to see my tooth crowns?
MAESTRO
thoughtfully Last night your grandfather actually said Satan was after him... Satan...hahaha ... *laughs bitterly* I beg you, Maggie... he who knows nothing must believe everything... but you and I are far from ignorant! You know better than I do, your grandfather worked hard until his old age to make you and Nancy a carefree life and a good education possible... in over a hundred horror films he has worked on… at most five of them would have been passable, he once said in an interview, the rest… nothing but satanic bullshit (such was his expression)...
VOLAND
You're still being offensive... it doesn't matter… I'm not a sensitive soul...
MAGGIE
saddened That's not true! Ryukhin… Grandfather ... wouldn't have had to work so much... but he was a passionate actor... and he *points at Voland* is the devil!
MAESTRO
The thing with Berlioz's head was a coincidence... The devil does not exist!
VOLAND
Uh-huh! Now I don't exist! Okay ... that’s fine with me ... I've been called worse... but we're wasting precious time... it's getting late!
Maggie and Maestro turn to the moon at the same time, which has not changed its position in the sky.
MAESTRO
That's right... I must go back quickly... If I stay away too long, I'll lose my privilege...
VOLAND
Hoho! Privilege!
MAESTRO
Yes! We long-time residents are allowed to keep our spacious single rooms!

MAGGIE
You want to go back to the clinic?!
MAESTRO
I must! I am sick! Don't worry, it's fine there... Sister Priss likes me, and Dr. Stravinsky is a genius...
MAGGIE
Desperately hugs the Maestro You are not sick! Everything will be fine! *to Voland* Is that true?

Voland nods almost imperceptibly and remains silent.

MAESTRO
Mental illnesses are increasing dramatically in the show business! Last night we had dozens of new patients from Hollywood admitted!
VOLAND
With polite interest Really?
MAESTRO
drinks schnaps, Maggie refills, he tells, wildly gesticulating and increasingly excited Yes! First, a whole group was brought in... Each individual from this group screamed and moaned that someone had stolen a money case from them... they needed the money... for an urgent slimming cure! Among them was a romantic transgender couple... the two were the only ones who didn't complain about any money loss... however... a *Robocat* (whatever that is) would have first torn off their heads and then swapped them... which wouldn't matter to them since anyway they were hopelessly in love with each other... Right after that, a policewoman came... claiming … an invisible monster had tried... her behind ... hmmm... so to speak... to sodomize her... then some more cops… and a whole SWAT team... they all would have seen skeletons with large... hmmm… breasts and butts ... and one more... an African-American... wrapped in a greenish quilt … maintaining that an alien disguised as a giant cat would have beamed him and his quilt to Siberia... and right behind him... a distinguished older gentleman... asserting … that a female vampire was chasing him, to suck blood from... well... from that certain... his best... private... thing... This madness was confirmed by three young army personnel! Allegedly, they barely escaped from sex- and blood-thirsty vampires chasing them in their atomically shielded vehicle... Finally, two undead knocked on the door... a female and a male... both in a wretched state of health... completely exhausted and dehydrated... As expected, Stravinsky mastered this... hmmm... *looking at Voland* Pandemonium with sovereign ease! The equally cold-blooded sister Priss stood by him like a rock in the storm! They set up tents for the newcomers in the park... except for the vampires... who they locked in the rubber cell... there they acted up so much that we all had to donate blood in the middle of the night... even the architects...
MAGGIE
confused Architects?!
MAESTRO
Yes! Stravinsky had a team of experts brought in that night to discuss the clinic expansion with them… although - he is such a genius! - most patients were discharged on his command just a few hours after admission… The whole group of the fat ones with the supposedly stolen money and the cops were allowed to leave... The diagnosis of collective delusion, caused by food poisoning, could not inspire a gifted Freudian like him! He recommended filing a class action lawsuit against the catering company… the police canteen... and the city administration of L.A.! (his brother-in-law specializes in product liability lawsuits)
MAGGIE
outraged Such a scoundrel! It was just Bassoon and Hippo having a bit of fun...

MAESTRO
interrupting her Who?
MAGGIE
Two double-dyed villains! Just like your Stravinsky!
MAESTRO
gravely Dr. Stravinsky is no villain! He is the most capable psychiatrist Hollywood has ever had! Now, representatives of the most important national and international media are camping in the tents... During the renovation, it will be a bit uncomfortable for the patients... as I said... except for us long-time residents… I have to go!
MAGGIE
You want to go back to the clinic? And what about me? And the script?
MAESTRO
looking towards the moon I destroyed the script! And I will never write again... And you Margot... my poor Maggie...
MAGGIE
That's what Sashka and Ivanushka also said... that they would never write another poem... *in a resolute tone* but they didn't have a Maggie by their side! I will reconstruct your screenplay from memory!
VOLAND
That’s right! I dont like to say this, dear Maestro, but Maggie handles alcohol better than you do! Go home and sleep off your intoxication... tomorrow the world will look completely different... believe me...
MAESTRO
I dont have a home anymore... an SUV moved into my apartment... my home is the clinic... I am lost to the world... *dreamily* Stravinsky promised me not to fill in the smaller pond, the one with the white water lilies…

Suddenly, Azazello stands next to the chess table. Slowly, he opens his left hand, which was closed into a fist. Maggie and the Maestro half-rise to see what lies in Azazellos palm: it is a small toy car, a black SUV.
MAGGIE
claps her hands once Azazello! Dear Azazello! *to the Maestro* See? Everything will be like it used to be!

Azazello briefly raises his right hand, in which he carries a laptop bag. With his left index finger, he taps on his breast pocket from which a USB stick protrudes.

Maggie claps her hands again See? See how they help us? Your script is a masterpiece, and masterpieces always find their way!
VOLAND
Now it's really high time!

Maggie and Maestro turn to the moon, which has not changed its position

Azazello, take Maestro and Margarita home and come back immediately!

Maggie and Maestro stand up. Maggie supports the slightly swaying Maestro. He keeps looking at Voland, as if he were perceiving him correctly for the first time. Suddenly the room darkens. The moon has disappeared behind the vintage limousine that floats outside the window. As he passes, the Maestro takes a beautiful red apple from the fruit bowl and puts it in the pocket of his pajama

pants. Azazello goes ahead, he extends an arm to the Maestro and helps him onto the windowsill. Both disappear. Now Maggie stands on the windowsill. She turns to the still sitting Voland.

MAGGIE
Farewell, Professor Voland! Thank you!
VOLAND
Don't thank me ... Maggie? Bezdomny was not your grandfather... you are as little Russian as I am ...
MAGGIE
I've suspected it all along! Tell Nancy that …

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Kill Me, Stupid (11/12)

INT. GARAGE APARTMENT - NIGHT

MAESTRO
Where are my books?

The garage apartment is unchanged, except for the empty shelves. There is not a single book or a single sheet of paper in the entire room. The open laptop with the Eisenstein photo as a screensaver is on the table.

MAGGIE
I kept them for you!

In front of the table are the two folding chairs labeled "Maestro" *and* "Margarita".

MAESTRO
Where is Nancy?

Maggie shakes her head almost imperceptibly and remains silent. The Maestro bursts into tears.

INT. VOLAND'S HOTEL ROOM - EVENING

Voland is still sitting in the armchair. He is now dressed as he was at the lecture in the Fairbanks Building, but without a tie and without a mask. Bassoon is standing bolt upright next to the chess table.

VOLAND

Well?

BASSOON
They definitely don't want to stay vampires!

VOLAND

As expected … Well?

BASSOON
sneering They beg and plea... it's heart-wrenching... to be imprisoned!
VOLAND
bored I thought vampires had a particularly glamorous life in Hollywood... you really can't please these people ...
BASSOON
Glamour... yes, in the movies! But in real life, everything looks quite different... even for the undead!
VOLAND
ironically What you don't say!
BASSOON
gloatingly And those two are as unsuitable as vampires as can be... the FBI rogue is a vegetarian, the cunning bookkeeper even eats vegan... he... a morning person... is always tired at night and finds no sleep in the daytime... she... extremely sensitive to smells... after every blood meal, she takes a shower... she's terrified of her own body odor... To make matters worse, Sable has an allergy to blood type zero... this considerably complicates his hunt for food... hadn't Stravinsky pitied them...
VOLAND
interrupts him Do they know what the alternative is?
BASSOON
Yes! And they are fully agreed!
VOLAND
Good! Where is Hippo?

Hippo (as a cat) emerges from the darkness. He holds a super-sized vintage typewriter in front of him and some sheets of paper tucked under his arm.

HIPPO
shyly Here I am, Sire ...
VOLAND
Well? Have you had coffee?
HIPPO
Yes, Sire ...
VOLAND
Sit down and be ready.

Hippo pushes the chess set aside and puts the typewriter on the table. He lays the paper sheets next to the typewriter.

Let them come in.

Voland's moonlit face darkens twice for a second as first Agent Sable and then Holly fly past the moon. Both have too much momentum and land awkwardly on their heads. Sable wears a dirty straightjacket, Holly is naked. Holly rubs her bruised body parts briefly after the rough landing, Sable tries to do the same, but fails due to the straightjacket; instead, he twists and shakes in all directions.

SABLE AND HOLLY
both at once Ouch!

Both slide on their knees towards Voland. Holly kisses his left hand, Sable his right knee. Voland pulls his hand and leg away. Bassoon pulls them a bit away from Voland. They remain on their knees.

VOLAND
Well? Accusation? Conviction? Prison?
SABLE AND HOLLY
both at once Oh yes, Your Infernal Highness! Prison! Prison!
VOLAND
Sure?
SABLE AND HOLLY
both at once Absolutely sure!
VOLAND
The better... Hollywood is no place for real vampires...
BASSOON
grinning Especially not when they appear as a duo!

He loosens the lacing of Sable's straightjacket. With a sigh of relief, Sable scratches and massages himself on all possible and impossible body parts.

SABLE AND HOLLY
both at once Thank you... thank you! Thank you!
VOLAND
Don't thank me! Hippo... you know the text...
HIPPO
noisily inserts a sheet of paper into the typewriter By heart!
VOLAND
Then write! Hurry up! Woe to you if you make a typo!

The cat is clattering on the keys, the old typewriter makes a hellish metallic noise. Occasionally Hippo looks anxiously at Voland. Then he tries to type faster. Bassoon also looks worriedly at Voland, who twists his face and closes his eyes. Holly and Sable talk to him, but their voices are not heard over the clattering, metal scraping, and high-pitched line break ringing. However, their gestures and grimaces reveal their words. It looks almost like a pantomime. Holly sniffs her armpits and makes a face of disgust. Sable points to his own bite wound on his neck and licks it greedily. He sighs and shakes his head sadly. Then he yawns. His eyes close. He opens them again, shivers, and grabs his belly. Holly does the same and twists in pain. Both look guiltily at Voland. Bassoon holds his nose. With the other hand, he waves a sheet of paper in the air to clear Voland's face. With terrible paper rustling and creaking of the roller, Hippo pulls in a second sheet, turning back into a chubby man. He types frantically so as to finish quickly and presents the two sheets to Voland. Voland glances at them quickly and returns them to Hippo.

VOLAND
Your confessions...
SABLE AND HOLLY
both at once Oh yes, Your Infernal Highness! We confess to everything...

BASSOON
Then sign! But quickly, before the next stink bomb comes!

Hippo hands Holly and Sable each one of the labeled paper sheets. He pulls out a black swan feather from behind his ear and hands it to Holly. Holly hesitates for a moment, then dips the feather into her neck wound, lays the paper on the ground, and signs it. She passes the feather on to Sable, who dips the tip into his bite wound and signs in the same manner. Hippo takes the signed confessions, folds them up, and stuffs them into a pocket of his overall. He puts the swan feather back behind his ear. At the same time, Holly's and Sable's neck wounds disappear.

BASSOON
Excellent! Azazello is back too!

The old limousine stands outside the window. Hippo, Holly, Sable, and Bassoon leave the room through the window. Azazello jumps into the room with a single bound. He bows to Voland.

VOLAND
How are Maestro and Margarita?
AZAZELLO
Excellent! Almost like in a movie!

INT. GARAGE APARTMENT - NIGHT

Maggie and Maestro sit side by side on the folding chairs labeled Margarita *and* Maestro. *They both look at the laptop.*

MAGGIE
That's Eisenstein!
MAESTRO
That's magic ...
MAGGIE
And his *Dollar Princess*!
MAESTRO
… Black magic!

The image on the display becomes visible.

LAPTOP SCREEN SHOWING A BALLROOM

Scene in black and white. Eisenstein and Gloria dance the waltz from the Symphonie Fantastique *by Hector Berlioz. All the other dance couples stand at the edge and watch. Gloria smiles happily. Her bad teeth are visible. Eisenstein shines. He worships Gloria with love. He is not wearing a jacket. His wide, bright red suspenders are the only splash of color. He dances exuberantly, lifting one leg then the other high, humming the melody. Then Gloria laughs her tinkling laugh.*

INT. VOLAND'S HOTEL ROOM - EVENING

VOLAND
gazing thoughtfully into space Accompany the two, Azazello.
AZAZELLO
But Messere ...
VOLAND
I wish Sable and Richardson behind bars without further incident! You are responsible for that! Go!

Azazello bows and disappears. Voland stands up and goes to the window. He gazes at the motionless moon.

Nancy!

Nancy steps out of the shadows. Voland turns to her. They stand facing each other in the light of the unmovable moon.

NANCY
Thank you!
VOLAND
Don't thank me! For what?
NANCY
For your story ... Your freely invented story … Our parents never took hard drugs!
VOLAND
Do you expect the devil to tell true stories?!
NANCY
Maggie was a chatterbox ... she ...
VOLAND
interrupts her She blabbed ...
NANCY
She didn't think anything of it … after all, she was only nine years old!

Voland sits down on the divan. He takes Nancy's wrist and pulls her down so she sits next to him.

VOLAND
Your Maggie wanted to make herself important to her daddy! You too have overheard your mothers exchanging their little secrets more than once ... but you... you always kept your mouth shut ... because you noticed that your mother was lying! You were only seven ... almost two years younger than Maggie... but you liked to watch the adults and knew about their distortions ...

He raises his right hand to Nancy's face and gently touches it with the tips of his fingers. Like a blind person exploring the features of a loved one with the sense of touch, he moves his fingers over her forehead, her eye corners, her nose bridge, her cheeks, her chin. His index finger traces her facial lines. Every time his hand comes close to her lips, Nancy tries to kiss it, but Voland does not allow it; yet he continues with his light touches.

Your mother lied ... for symmetry ... She had never slept with Nick Ryukhin in her life ... That Maggie's mother had an affair with her husband was of no concern to her ... because she meant more to her than her own husband ... Maggie ran to her father ... told him everything as if it were hot off the press … Young Nick was not a nice character ... moody and reserved, revengeful,

suspicious, controlling … It turned out that such a person had been betrayed by his wife from the very beginning ... yet this was more or less indifferent to him ... but Mick, his best friend, the only person he trusted, had deceived him for years! It was from his little princess Rita that he had to learn that she might not even be his daughter ... she certainly was not his daughter ... There she stood, expecting praise for her story ... But Nick stared at the child with hate ... Maggie saw that look ... it was so shocking that she forgot it right away ... she forgot everything ... but you were also there ... and when you saw that crazy expression in Nick's eyes you knew that they should never get into the van ... that you had to somehow stop them ... It never occurred to you that one could simulate pain …

NANCY
laughs briefly and bitterly Funny, isn't it? And yet I became an actress... Then I had the idea to put my hands on the barbecue grill ... but in the end I didn't have the courage to do it ... If I had known that it doesn't hurt that much ...

Voland seizes Nancy's other wrist and examines her burned palms. Then he brings both her hands to his face. Nancy's hands enclose his cheeks.

VOLAND
... On that day, I, Satan, became your guardian angel ...He still tolerated this slip-up, but then ...

With both thumbs, Nancy closes his lips.

NANCY
Not now! Don't say it! Not yet!
VOLAND
How you look … *With both hands, he lightly strokes her neck, décolleté, and arms. The red scratch arabesques and the ball gown disappear. Nancy is wearing the clothes she wore when she found the dead Maestro. Also her hairstyle is like it was then.*

INT. GARAGE APARTMENT - NIGHT

Maggie and Maestro look at each other while the dance scene with Eisenstein and Gloria goes on in the background.

MAESTRO
Maggie ...
MAGGIE
Maestro ...

They kiss tenderly.

INT. VOLAND'S HOTEL ROOM - EVENING

Nancy and Voland kiss tenderly. Voland moves away from Nancy a little and looks at her.

NANCY
Strange ... Only when I sang Margret in *Wozzeck* did I know for sure, there was something...

someone ... who helped me... who guided my steps...

Nancy and Voland kiss passionately. Then Voland gently pushes her away.

VOLAND
Go now! Go!
NANCY
No!
VOLAND
Go before it's too late ... You are an artist ...
NANCY
Not anymore ...
VOLAND
Maggie won't last long in the garage with the mentally ill Maestro ... and then ...
NANCY
You're wrong!

INT. GARAGE APARTMENT - NIGHT

Thunder rumbles in the distance. Maggie is still watching the screen. It now shows a scene in color.

LAPTOP SCREEN SHOWING EISENSTEIN'S APARTMENT

An aged Eisenstein, bald except for a shaggy gray fringe, dances to the waltz music from Hector Berlioz' Symphonie Fantastique. *He wears a thick winter coat and a wool scarf. His partner is not Gloria but a middle-aged woman with a strict short haircut. She too is wearing a winter coat.They both look into each other's eyes, both have a hint of a sad smile around their lips. At the edge of the small improvised dance floor stand half a dozen people who are talking and paying little attention to the two dancers. Eisenstein whirls his dance partner around and spins faster and faster.*

INT. GARAGE APARTMENT - NIGHT

Maggie is completely absorbed in the picture. She tears herself away from it and looks to the side at the Maestro. She is about to say something. The Maestro has fallen asleep, his head is tilted to the side towards his shoulder. Maggie doesn't wake him and turns back to the laptop scene. The thunder grows louder.

INT. VOLAND'S HOTEL ROOM - EVENING

VOLAND
Satan’s never wrong!

Clouds dim the moon. Nancy looks down at herself. She is scraped again, the palms of her hands burned, the dress torn, her hair disheveled. She raises her gaze to Voland. In the dim light, his satanic face is recognizable. The emerald-golden reptile eye glows, the other eye is a black, empty hole, and a crooked smile is on his lips. Nancy brings her face close to his and tilts her head to kiss him. With a sudden movement, Satan steps back, grabs her by the hair.

You're not beautiful! You're ugly! Much uglier than the old Joan Crawford!

He pulls Nancy by the hair to the window and throws her out. A terrifying thunderclap is heard. Nancy falls, her clothing shreds fluttering. As she nearly reaches the ground, she looks up. A huge black cloud hovers over her, surrounded by three smaller clouds. Nancy transforms into a dark cloud with white edges, rising and chasing the other four clouds across the sky. The thunder grows louder.

INT. GARAGE APARTMENT - NIGHT

The Maestro awakens from the loud thunder. He looks at the laptop screen.

MAGGIE
looks at him briefly, then turns back to the screen immediately Fantastic! I believe these are the last minutes of his life ... he will die soon!
MAESTRO
Don't look! That's just… an illusion... a … nasty trick ... of the devil… *himself, however, cannot take his eyes off the laptop screen*
MAGGIE
Oh well! Voland is on our side!

EXT. SKY OVER HOLLYWOOD - NIGHT

The large black cloud and the four smaller clouds are chasing across the sky. It blazes and thunders continuously. A deluge-like rain begins. Below, city lights and their reflections on the asphalt glitter. Occasionally, distant fire engine sirens sound. A massive, jagged lightning bolt splits the sky. It strikes the U.S. Bank Tower. On the roof of the cylindrical skyscraper, which is a helicopter landing pad, there are five gigantic figures: Voland, his three companions, and Nancy, who stands a bit apart. They are all so large that the skyscraper does not seem taller in comparison than a building of about ten stories. Storm and rain sweep over the city, but where the Five stand, it is windless and dry.

VOLAND
Now it's time to say goodbye to this beautiful city…
BASSOON
Relatively beautiful, Your Majesty ... its very name is an abomination, and the rest...
VOLAND
interrupts him What do you say, Azazello?
AZAZELLO
As you are well aware, for me there exists only one city! Urbs! The City! Eternal Rome!
VOLAND
Yes yes... I know... I know... and you, Hippo?

Hippo lowers his head and remains silent.

VOLAND
Now?

HIPPO
secretly looks at Nancy, whispers In Moscow it was somehow more amusing, Sire ...
VOLAND
Maybe! We were all younger then! So let's end with one of your famous deafening whistles, like in Moscow!

Hippo remains silent.

Will it be soon? I warn you… I tolerate no depressive moods in my company...

Hippo emits a loud whistle. A scream of terror echoes multiple times below in the city.

LAPTOP SCREEN SHOWING EISENSTEIN'S APARTMENT

Eisenstein pushes his dance partner away and switches to a solo kazachoc.

EXT. SKY OVER HOLLYWOOD - NIGHT

VOLAND
That's what you call loud? I didn't hear a thing! You, Bassoon?
BASSOON
Indeed I did, Majesty! I heard something... it sounded like the distant meowing of a young kitten...

Hippo emits a second whistle, twice as loud as the first. Below in the city, a chaos of human screams of terror and animal howls, honking, and the uproar of vehicles, fire brigade and police sirens resound.

LAPTOP SCREEN SHOWING EISENSTEIN'S APARTMENT

In his increasingly wild kazachoc, Eisenstein stumbles and falls. He gets back up. Sweat runs down his dark red face and sticks his hair together. His dance partner tries to stop him from dancing further, but the guests hold her back. They watch Eisenstein's dance performance with a distant interest.

EXT. SKY OVER HOLLYWOOD - NIGHT

BASSOON
to Hippo Yes! That's what you sound like when I step on your corn!

Hippo gathers all his strength and emits a particularly loud, prolonged whistle. The skyscraper they are standing on sways slightly. Parts of roofs and facades, various furniture items, cars, motorcycles, palms, etc. swirl around in the air before Voland's and his followers' eyes. Nancy, who is standing on the other side of the roof platform, leans over the railing and catches a car that is thrown high into the air, carefully removes a man, a woman with a baby in her arms, a small boy, and a dog, and then lets the car fall to the ground. She leans over an open window of the top floor and lets the family jump into the building's interior. A helicopter crashes into an electrical line and

catches fire. Nancy grabs the fluttering aircraft, blows on it to put out the fire, and deposits it on the roof platform. Three men and a woman in fire brigade uniforms, completely terrified, emerge from the helicopter, run to a door, and disappear behind it.

LAPTOP SCREEN SHOWING EISENSTEIN'S APARTMENT

Eisenstein falls and does not get up again. But he continues to dance on the ground. He lies on his back and flails his legs. Bloody saliva runs from his mouth. He smiles. Two men and a woman hold his dance partner back. Everyone watches Eisenstein with attention.

EXT. SKY OVER HOLLYWOOD - NIGHT

VOLAND
Well-made! Azazello! It's high time for you!

Azazello bows and disappears.

Hippo and Bassoon, make a round in the city and report to me about the destructions!

Both of them bow and disappear. Nancy, who stands on the other side of the roof platform, approaches slowly towards Voland.

LAPTOP SCREEN SHOWING EISENSTEIN'S APARTMENT

Eisenstein's kicking and struggling become ever slower. His face is drenched in sweat. Blood drips from his nose. He still smiles. Gloria leans her face down towards him and laughs at him. Her teeth gleam beautifully like pearls. Eisenstein gazes at her with wide eyes. He also wants to laugh at her, but his mouth trembles so strongly that only a grimace comes out of it. He groans, he twitches all over his body, his eyes look lifeless, and he dies.

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It's A Wonderful Death (12/12)

INT - GARAGE APARTMENT - NIGHT

Maggie and Maestro watch. Tears run down their cheeks.

MAESTRO
I didn't know that!
MAGGIE
Maestro! No tears … moreover ... joy! *The Dollar Princess* will be a great success!

After a brief knock, Azazello enters.

Azazello! What a surprise! To *the Maestro, who stares at Azazello* It’s Azazello!

AZAZELLO
mumbling with a strong Italian accent I apologize! Messere is angry with me for my negligence...
MAGGIE
But why, dear Azazello...
AZAZELLO
Because I forgot the most important thing when I accompanied you home just now...

He places a small golden tray with a rounded flask and three tiny glasses on the table next to the laptop.

MAESTRO
No... we don’t want to drink anything more... thank you...
AZAZELLO
I know... you’ve had enough to drink... just therefore I send you Messere’s remedy against the hangover... because you need to be fit tomorrow… *he points to the glass door, behind which a hint of light can be seen* and tomorrow is already today!
MAGGIE
Yes, yes! We need to be fit!
MAESTRO
Fit for what?
AZAZELLO
Pouring a dark green, oily liquid Did I not mention it? Messere invites you on a journey!
MAESTRO
I thank Messere for the invitation... a journey is exactly what is needed now... I look forward to it...
MAGGIE
A journey? Why, we’ve just arrived... *The Dollar Princess* is waiting … I don’t want to travel!
AZAZELLO
Messere insists… Trust him! *he raises the glass*
MAGGIE
raises the glass I trust him! Without Voland no Maestro!
AZAZELLO
To *The Dollar Princess*! *he drinks from the glass*
MAGGIE
To Nancy! *sips a little*
MAESTRO
To our journey! *takes Maggie’s hand and downs the glass in one gulp*

Immediately afterward, the glass falls from his hand and shatters on the floor. The body of the Maestro goes limp, his head droops onto his chest. He is dead. Maggie tries to turn to him, but she is too weak to do so. She clings to the glass, the remaining liquid spilling onto her nightgown. Her head falls back, yet she has not yet died.

MAGGIE
breathes with a toneless voice Azazello, you scoundrel! You… cad … *She tries to spit at him, but she is so weak that the saliva sticks to her lips*

Azazello takes a few steps back and looks at her with a slight, ironic smile. Maggie's face is deathly pale, blue shadows form around her eyes and mouth, sweat beads on her forehead.

By his very nature ... has… Satan... lied to us!

Something seems to dawn on Maggie, for her glassy eyes gaze into space in terror.

By his very nature ... no... not Nancy... please not Nancy...

EXT. SKY OVER HOLLYWOOD - DAY-BREAK

Nancy and Voland lean against the railing of the roof platform of the U.S. Bank Tower next to each other.

NANCY
Happy is he who forgets what cannot be changed anyway! That was a song in Berlioz's film… Maggie has forgotten everything, yet she has not become happy!
VOLAND
This just proves that operetta wisdom cannot be trusted!
NANCY
This above all proves that Satan cannot be trusted! Satan always lies...
VOLAND
A true word!
NANCY
There is no true word!
VOLAND
Another true word!
NANCY
As my guardian angel... you rescued the already decayed Maestro from the clutches of the death angel Abadonna... there you have gone too far...
VOLAND
So I was once again pushed into the abyss... my injured leg remains forever deformed... yet He forgave me my first rebellion... and because of Nancy… my beloved protégé...I became guilty of rebellion again... I am old and tired, my role as Satan has long since stopped amusing me... and my leg... it hurts so much… my lovely Nancy... I hate you Natalia Prokofievna, that is the truth!
NANCY
softly Which truth? *gently begins to undress* Love me!
VOLAND
Love you? I am supposed to love something the cat has played with?
NANCY
I played with the cat... not the cat with me!
VOLAND
Do you really believe that? Then you are dumber than I thought! I ordered it so! I arranged everything so that you would fall into my trap, you ugly witch! I will slowly swallow you alive… That is the truth!
NANCY
sadly and sarcastically at the same time, continues to undress You talk about truth? Show me your love!

Nancy brings her face close to Voland's, who becomes Satan. With his long, forked tongue, Satan licks Nancy's face and neck. Finally, he sticks his tongue into her mouth. The naked Nancy lets

herself fall backward into space. While falling, her voice echoes powerfully

The truth is, you have been ... forgiven a second time … out of your endless need for love!

Nancy's body is as vast as the sky. Satan lies on her. Above and below them, black clouds move, carrying a thin golden rim in the east. The sounds of cracking skin and breaking bones are audible, as well as the smacking and grinding of the chewing, devouring Satan.

INT. - GARAGE APARTMENT - DAY-BREAK

Maggie and the dead Maestro still hold hands. Maggie is still alive. With nameless horror, she gazes into space and sighs softly.

MAGGIE
Oh no... Nancy... no… no... no…

EXT. SKY OVER HOLLYWOOD - DAY-BREAK

Slowly, piece by piece, Nancy's body is engulfed and disappears. Bloody rain pours over Hollywood.

INT. GARAGE APARTMENT - DAY-BREAK

Maggie opens her mouth wide to catch a breath of air. Her eyes look lifeless. She dies. For a brief moment, Azazello looks at Maggie and Maestro: They half-sit, half-lie lifelessly on their director's chairs, holding hands. Then he makes a sweeping motion with his right arm, and Maggie and Maestro disappear. He makes a sweeping motion with his left arm, and everything else disappears. The garage is empty, except for the shelves containing tools. Azazello takes out the miniature SUV from his breast pocket and places it in the middle of the garage on the floor. Outside, he turns around. A modest one-story single-family house with a garage at the basement appears. The house has lost its roof due to the tornado. All windows are broken, parts of the facade cladding are missing. A large black SUV stands in the garage.

EXT. -SKY OVER HOLLYWOOD - DAY-BREAK

A gigantic black-clad female shape rises in the middle of the sky. Her face is not visible. She bends down and helps a lying, unclothed, blood-stained male shape to stand up. The rain quickly washes away the blood. As the black-clad figure bends the head of the second one backward so that the rain can also wash his face clean, it becomes visible that the black-clad figure is Nancy and the unclothed figure is Voland. Nancy covers Voland with her black cloak. Bassoon and Hippo the cat approach. The latter holds an indefinable object in his hand. Both bow deeply before Nancy.

NANCY
Now?
BASSOON
Destruction everywhere, Your Majesty ... many injured … but no loss of human life to report ...

Most buildings have withstood the storm ... but will need to be renovated ... It is expected that the renovation of the city of Los Angeles after the devastating tornadoes will give a major boost to the California economy!
HIPPO
holding his head down, speaking in a low, monotonous voice The bright red spots left behind by the bloody rain cannot be removed ... and cannot be painted over ... they remain forever and create a unique tourist attraction in the world ... International scientists come to investigate this mysterious phenomenon ... many theories arise ... there is no consensus ... yet this ongoing scholarly debate is fruitful ... it gives new impetus to scientific research in general and the congress tourism in particular ... The marketing of the so-called "Blood Miracle of L.A." is taken over by BANANA! BANANA ensures that Hollywood is sprayed with Luminol once a year on the eve of July 4th … Myriads of blue phosphorescent pseudo-fireflies become visible ... especially impressive when viewed from above ... The long-extinguished starry sky is reflected in Hollywood ... The rights to these breathtaking aerial shots, which inspire countless artists and cultural creators, are sold abroad under the catchy brand name *Xmas in July* for a high price...
BASSOON
The Angelenos are a tough people, Majesty!
HIPPO
looking at Voland with a sly, shy look And especially the Hollywoodians!
NANCY
Good ... very good. What do you have in your hand, Hippo?
HIPPO
softly This is an 'L' from the Hollywood sign, it fell down during the storm … My Gracious Queen, may I keep it as a souvenir? There is another ‘L’ anyway ...
NANCY
softly, lost in thought Go ahead … *loud, commanding* Where is Azazello? He's late!
VOLAND
He has no easy tasks...

INT. MAESTRO'S ROOM AT STRAVINSKY’S CLINIC - DAY-BREAK

Azazello takes out the Maestro’s body from the closet and lays it on the bed. Due to the advanced rigor mortis, he cannot flatten his curled arms and legs. So he lies on the body and flattens it with his own weight. He mutters an oath.

AZAZELLO
Damned ... why do I always get the worst jobs? *He disappears.*

INT. MAGGIE'S BEDROOM - DAY-BREAK

Azazello looks at Maggie lying on her bed on her stomach next to scattered star stickers. Several empty medicine bottles are on the nightstand next to her bed. Azazello turns her body around. She is dead. Stars and small charred paper pieces stick to her body. After taking off her two wedding rings and putting them in his breast pocket, he lays her straight on her back. Then he disappears.

EXT. IN A CANYON - DAY-BREAK

Nancy lies dead not far from a car wreck. Azazello takes off her two wedding rings and puts them in his breast pocket. Then he makes a sweeping motion with his right arm, and Nancy's wrist catches fire. Her body bursts into flames. The flames ignite withered leaves, creating a fire road to the car. Azazello lifts his left arm, and the car explodes. The flames shoot up. Azazello disappears.

EXT. SKY OVER HOLLYWOOD - DAY-BREAK

Azazello bows before Nancy. He holds folded pieces of clothing in his arm. Nancy indicates a head movement towards Voland. Azazello hands Voland a cloak, who gently throws it over Nancy's shoulders. Then he takes the remaining clothing pieces from Azazello.

VOLAND
Thank you, Cavaliere.
AZAZELLO
bowing It is an honor, Messere...

Voland is dressed entirely in black. The vintage limousine waits on a dark gray, gold-rimmed cloud.

VOLAND
Let's hurry... for it is lonely there... and they are surely waiting for us...
AZAZELLO
Just one more thing ...

Azazello takes out four wedding rings from his breast pocket and hands them to Voland, who wears two on the middle and ring fingers of his right hand, and the other two on the middle and ring fingers of his left hand.The dark green limousine flies over Los Angeles illuminated by numerous fires and the rising sun. The Hollywood sign becomes smaller and finally disappears.

EXT. VOLCANIC CLIFF - EARLY DAY-BREAK

Maggie and Maestro stand hand in hand in the middle of a volcanic landscape. The ground is covered with deep black lava. The sky is brightening, as there is already a hint of light in it. But some shimmering stars are still visible.

MAGGIE
releasing Maestro's hand and taking his arm Maestro... are we dead now?

The Maestro does not respond. He smiles and nods his head in a direction. Maggie follows his gaze. On a volcano peak in the distance, three silhouettes are recognizable. In the center is a vintage movie camera. One figure stands next to the camera, the second crouches in front of it, and the third, wearing a hat and a velvet vest, stands bent behind it.

MAESTRO
That’s Eisenstein!
MAGGIE
Sergey!

MAESTRO
And Eduard!
MAGGIE
And Grisha! Mary Craig Sinclair's prophecy! *laughing tragically* We are really dead!
MAESTRO
Who cares?

He removes his black knit cap with the glittering 'M' and swings it to attract attention. Maggie looks intently towards the volcano peak. Suddenly, the man behind the camera stumbles.

MAGGIE
Now! Now he has seen us!

The man steps out from behind the camera and briefly waves his hand. Suddenly he stops. The crouching man quickly straightens up. All three men bow deeply. Even Maggie - though a bit confused - bows deeply.

MAESTRO
*turning around They d*on't bow to us! Look!

Maggie turns around. Behind them, at the foot of the main crater, the old limousine is parked, with Azazello, Nancy, Voland, Bassoon, and Hippo leaning against it. Nancy and Voland are dressed identically in black with a red-lined velvet cloak and a sword at their side. They wear a black velvet beret on their heads. The difference is that Nancy's beret is decorated with a red feather and she leans on her sword as if it were a walking stick.

MAGGIE
Nancy! *Loudly* Nancy!

Nancy's deepest gaze is directed towards the hill with the three figures and the camera. She nods to the three men and makes a brief hand gesture, whereupon they start fiddling with the camera again. The sky is getting brighter. Thick lava begins to flow out of the crater.

NANCY
Voland! Show them the way!

Voland quickly walks towards Maggie and Maestro. He does not limp.

MAGGIE
How well Nancy looks in that black beret! And the cheeky red feather!
MAESTRO
Voland is coming towards us...
MAGGIE
sad and angry at the same time Voland...

Voland stands a few steps away and raises his arm. He points in a direction. At the end of the path of black lava where Maggie and Maestro are, there is a dense, deep green forest visible. The Maestro takes Maggie's hand and sets off on the path Voland has shown. The lava flowing down the volcanic cliff in five fiery streams resembles a huge spread hand.

MAESTRO
Come... We will have a good time...
MAGGIE
Good dead days!

She goes along, but keeps looking back at Nancy, who stands motionless against the limousine, with the dark-looking Azazello at her side.

MAESTRO
We will be together forever... And we will meet all our friends!
MAGGIE
Friends? Ghosts!
MAESTRO
What difference does that make?
MAGGIE
I don't want to be a ghost! Nancy! She doesn't hear me! She ignores me! *she calls out in despair* Nancy! Nancy! Come! Save us! Come and save us! I want you to save us!

Voland runs towards her. Maggie looks at him darkly and disdainfully. Voland removes two rings from his right hand. In the process, a burn wound on his left wrist and burned palms become visible. Maggie looks at his hands in disbelief. She looks at Nancy, then at Voland's face, then back at Nancy and then at Voland. He puts the rings on her fingers. Maggie and Voland look at each other. The Maestro also stares alternately at Voland and Nancy. The lava flowing down the volcanic cliff in five fiery streams more and more resembles a huge spread hand. Maggie takes Voland's hand and presses it to her cheek. He pulls away. Maggie looks at Nancy, who is motionless against the limousine, with the dark-looking Azazello at her side. Voland follows her gaze, then turns back to Maggie.

VOLAND
You both will live!

Voland and Maggie look at each other one last time. Then Voland goes back to the car, where Bassoon is waiting by the open door. Maggie and Maestro watch Voland. Hippo (as a cat) waves goodbye to them. Maggie raises her hand for a salute. Bassoon winks at her. Hippo (as a little man) looks sad. He opens the front door and takes a seat behind the steering wheel. Nancy, limping strongly, gets in first, followed by Voland, Azazello, and Bassoon, who closes the door. The car drives silently on the middle of the five lava streams up the volcano and finally disappears into the crater. Maggie and Maestro watch the dark-green vintage limousine until the end. They have tears in their eyes. Whispered laughter from an audience can be heard, which becomes louder and louder.

MAGGIE
turning to the three figures on the volcanic hill And what will become of Eisenstein and his companions?
MAESTRO
You know that! As punishment, they must stay there... and film... until Judgment Day! No tears, Maggie… look at them... it is a mild punishment, for they take joy in their work!
MAGGIE
I only regret that this southern belle Mary Craig was right...

MAESTRO
Yes, but consider... what kind of film that will be... what kind of film!

The light grows brighter. The audience laughs loudly, then it becomes quieter, until finally it falls silent.

INT. CINEMA HALL

Maggie's and the Maestro's faces in close-up. Tears run down their cheeks. They look at a large movie screen. On this, the words In Memory of Michael A. Berlioz and Natasha 'Nancy' Procopios *appear in white against a black background. The lights come on. Leroy, the caregiver of the Stravinsky Clinic, is sitting in a row next to an older man with long gray hair, a young very thin man with slightly thinning hair, and an elderly, strikingly made-up woman with strongly graying red hair. These three people were briefly seen as patients in the Stravinsky Clinic's park. Sister Priscilla, the Maestro, and Maggie sit next to the elderly woman.*

EXT. IN FRONT OF THE CINEMA - DAY

The small group is located next to a minibus with the inscription "Stravinsky Clinic for Mental Rehabilitation".

WOMAN WITH GRAY HAIR
Nancy has been my favorite!
OLDER LONG-HAIRED MAN
Close-up: one can see that he is an older version of the Maestro Oh yes! She is great!
SISTER PRISCILLA
I have always been a fan of hers! Isn't that right, Mr. Maestro?
MAESTRO
looking at Maggie Oh yes! Oh yes! You mentioned it… recently...
SISTER PRISCILLA
Her voice... her beautiful voice...
THIN YOUNG MAN
impulsively Not only is her voice beautiful! She herself... is the most beautiful woman in the world!
CAREGIVER
Gone, Randy... gone...
THIN YOUNG MAN
shyly I will set up a fan page for her... I know... there are already some... but mine will be something special...
MAGGIE
Yes... do that, Randy! Nancy can't have enough fans! *after a brief pause* I have to hurry now... but we'll see each other again soon!

The small group says goodbye to Maggie. The woman with the gray hair hugs and kisses her on both cheeks. It becomes apparent that it is the older Maggie. The younger Maggie and Maestro move a few steps away from the group.

Steve meets with our most important investor and insists that I be there… He is unrecognizable... Greg can hardly believe the abilities in this man! Not long ago, he has apologized to him in all

forms for calling him a drunk, a cocaine addict, and a fornicator ... On which Steve solemnly asked Greg for forgiveness, for always calling him a senile poison dwarf! I almost died laughing! The two are a great team… Steve mutated from an alcoholic to a workaholic... and Greg looks 20 years younger, his former irascibility transformed into pure energy! And I... I can barely keep up with the two!

MAESTRO
You are the Three Musketeers of Hollywood!

MAGGIE
Actually, there were four! The Four Musketeers! The fourth is you! Because on the day the budget for *Troubles* is set, you will be discharged as healthy!

MAESTRO
That is magical thinking! Superstition!

MAGGIE
softly I believe in miracles... I want to believe ... in white magic... and if necessary... also in black magic... you know that...

MAESTRO
loudly And I believe in science! I believe in Dr. Stravinsky's method... it was successful with B.L. and Romish, it will also be with me...

With a long, long kiss, Maggie cuts him off. She releases him, turns away, and leaves. The Maestro watches her with a tender look. Then he startles.

MAESTRO
Maggie!

Maggie turns around. The Maestro walks towards her.

I have something for you... almost forgot...

He takes out a beautiful red apple from his jacket pocket and hands it to Maggie, who accepts it with a radiant smile.

MAGGIE
Till tomorrow!

MAESTRO
Till tomorrow!

The Maestro gets into the minibus, which starts immediately. Maggie's smile fades, her eyes fill with tears. She rubs the apple on her dress as she walks. Her body tenses, taking a perfectly straight posture. She raises her head, juts her chin forward, and with a new smile, defiant and sad at the same time, she looks into the camera. As she raises her arm to bring the apple to her mouth, the two wedding rings on her fingers sparkle. The image freezes.

THE END